

Job help for those with mental health conditions

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New Jurong East centre to train up to 300 people a year and offer mental wellness programmes too



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People with mental health conditions tend to find it harder to get a job, but they can now get help from a new job training centre that is dedicated to their needs.

The Mindset Learning Hub, which officially opened in Jurong East yesterday, is the first such centre here and offers mental wellness programmes on top of the usual job training courses.

Trainees at the centre will be able to lean on "peer support specialists" from the Singapore Association for Mental Health (SAMH), who are themselves recovering from mental illnesses.

They will also be able to benefit from both Workforce Skills Qualifications (WSQ) courses and job placement support in the hospitality, healthcare, cleaning, retail and food and beverage (F&B) sectors.

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The facility, which has around 50 trainees now, aims to train up to 300 people with mental health conditions a year.

It is a collaboration between SAMH and Mindset Care, a charity supported by Jardine Matheson Group, an Asia-based group with diversified business interests.

The group has pledged \$2 million over five years to support the centre, after which it is supposed to become self-sustainable.

Jardine employees have also been roped in to provide training in skills such as interviewing and resume writing, workplace communication, money management and personal grooming.

"With proper training facilities, skills certification, (and) with job opportunities provided, I think this is a real support system that we've been awaiting for a long time," said Minister for Culture, Community and Youth Grace Fu at the opening.

A supportive community is required for people with mental illnesses to fully recover and re-integrate into society, she added.

This includes companies that do not just provide financial donations, but also get employees to volunteer at the centre as well as offer jobs to people with mental health conditions.

"That's a good model of corporate philanthropy which we really want corporate Singapore to step up to - it's not just financial resources that we require, but also a lot of manpower to support the patients," said Ms Fu.

A 37-year-old former receptionist, who wanted to be known only as Ms Tan, said she is excited to start F&B training at the centre next month. Ms Tan, who has mild schizophrenia, said: "I've tried F&B before and I enjoy it and like the environment."