

#### **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Taking Mental Health Education to Virtual Reality**

**SINGAPORE, 30 October 2018** – TOUCH Community Services today unveiled its Virtual Reality (VR) Immersive Experience on depression which will be used in its interactive mental health education programme, *Do You M.I.N.D.?* in schools.

With the aid of VR headsets, the experience allows users to look through the eyes of a youth with depression, and experience the symptoms associated with the condition.

Research has shown that VR training yields a 75% retention rate as compared to just a 5% and 10% rate for lecture-style learning and reading respectively<sup>1</sup>. Hence, the VR Immersive Experience is expected to enhance learning and empathy in participants towards persons with depression.

The unveiling of the VR Immersive Experience was part of the launch of a mental health themed train commissioned by TOUCH.

Featuring information on four common mental health issues among the youth that TOUCH sees – Depression, Self-harm, Anxiety and Eating Disorders – as well as suggested coping methods, and short stories from individuals with those issues, the themed train aims to promote public awareness and education on mental health matters.

The four featured mental health issues are represented by caricatures in the campaign artwork to help commuters better understand and identify them. (*Please refer to Annex 1 for design artwork*)

The train is scheduled to run for 18 hours daily for four weeks, reaching out to some 840,000 commuters travelling between the Northern and Eastern regions of Singapore, on the 16-station North East Line.

Guest-of-Honour Mr Desmond Choo, Mayor of North East CDC, launched the themed train at HarbourFront MRT station with a ribbon-cutting ceremony after taking part in the VR Immersive Experience.

In the past three years, TOUCH has been a strong advocate for mental wellness. It has organised themed runs to promote mental health education and encourage the community to show their support for persons with mental health issues by running alongside them.

According to the World Health Organisation, half of all mental health conditions start by age 14². To address mental health awareness upstream, TOUCH launched the *Do You M.I.N.D.*? programme for schools in October 2017. Through this innovative and interactive programme which has since reached out to some 900 students, TOUCH educates and equips secondary school students with knowledge on mental health, instills in them empathy and acceptance towards persons with mental health issues, and empowers them to be an able source of support for their peers and individuals within the community. Like the themed train, the topics highlighted in *Do You M.I.N.D.*? are depression, self-harm, anxiety and eating disorders.

In addition to conducting educational programmes in schools, TOUCH also provides support for youths at risk of or struggling with mental health conditions through personalised therapy methods. These methods aim to help youths cope with their conditions and emotions. Family members are also encouraged to be part of the counselling and therapy process to increase the support that youths may find at home. Apart from one-to-one counselling, a peer support group programme, The Upper Room, is also organised to provide youths with a community where they can interact with others and feel accepted in.

Mr James Tan, Chief Executive Officer of TOUCH, said, "TOUCH recognises that the youth of today are faced with stressors at home, in school and in their personal lives. Hence, we aim to strengthen the resilience of youths and the community by improving their mental wellbeing through education, support programmes and advocacy campaigns."

"While educational programmes and targeted support for individuals are important to improving the state of mind of our youth, we believe that change can effectively take place on a larger scale only with the community's support and understanding. To that end, TOUCH has been promoting mental health awareness in the community through talks, and themed runs and trains in the past three years. The feedback has been encouraging and we look forward to doing more to build up the mental health community."

### For media enquiries, please contact:

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## **About the Mental Health Programme by TOUCH Community Services**

TOUCH Community Services recognises that the youth of today are faced with stressors at home, in school and in their personal lives. To close the service gap in the area of public education and support for youths in the mental health landscape in Singapore, TOUCH takes an upstream approach by specialising in school programmes for youths aged 13 to 18 as a preventive measure.

Do You M.I.N.D.? is a programme by TOUCH that uses innovative approaches such as adventure-based experiential learning and virtual reality immersive experience to equip youths with knowledge to mind their mental health. The practical steps highlighted in the programme are:

- M Moderate stress and expectations for a balanced and healthy lifestyle
- I Include persons with mental health issues in their social circles
- N Notice preliminary signs and symptoms of mental health issues in their peers
- D Defend themselves by adopting positive coping habits

The programme also provides intervention services such as counselling and a support group to enable youths to manage issues affecting them.

# **About TOUCH Community Services**

TOUCH Community Services is a not-for-profit charitable organisation, dedicated to meeting the needs of children from low-income or single-parent families, youth-at-risk, needy families, people with special and healthcare needs, and the frail elderly. Through its integrated network of services, TOUCH is committed to serving people of all ages, races, religions and backgrounds. Each year, its programmes and services meet the needs of more than 30,000 clients and 151,000 service users.

#### Annex 1

# **Small Windows**

# Anxiety



Eating Disorder



Depression



Self-Harm



# **Mid Strip**

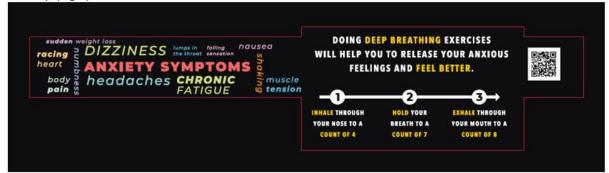


### **Large Windows**

#### Anxiety (Left)



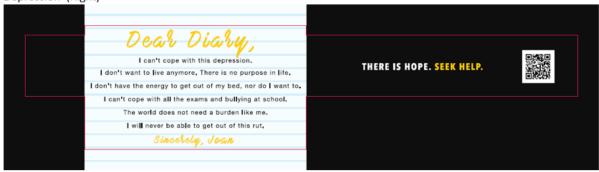
### Anxiety (Right)



#### Depression (Left)

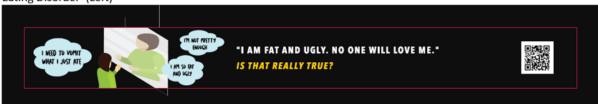


### Depression (Right)



# **Large Windows**

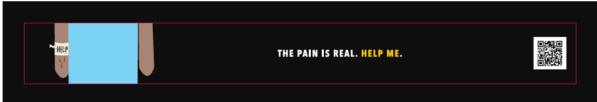
## Eating Disorder (Left)



### Eating Disorder (Right)



# Self-Harm (Left)



### Self-Harm (Right)



### **Interior Panels**



DO YOU M.I.N.D.? IS AN INTERACTIVE SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAMME
TO STRENGTHEN YOUTHS WITH KNOWLEDGE ABOUT DEPRESSION,
ANXIETY DISORDER, SELF-HARM BEHAVIOURS AND EATING DISORDERS.





Moderate stress and expectations for a balanced and healthy lifestyle

Include persons with mental



Notice preliminary signs and symptoms of mental health issues in their poers.



Defend themselves by adopting positive coping habits



TO FIND OUT MORE, ENAIL MENTALHEALTHOTOUCH.086.56

health issues in their social circles

ARE YOU FEELING TROUBLED?
ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT SOMEONE
WHO MAY BE IN DISTRESS?

CALL TOUCHLINE AT 1800 377 2252





COUNSELLING SESSIONS



SUPPORT GROUPS



MENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS

FOR HELP, CALL TOUCHLINE AT 1800 377 2252 WEEKDAYS, 9AM TO 6PM



# **Ceiling Stickers**

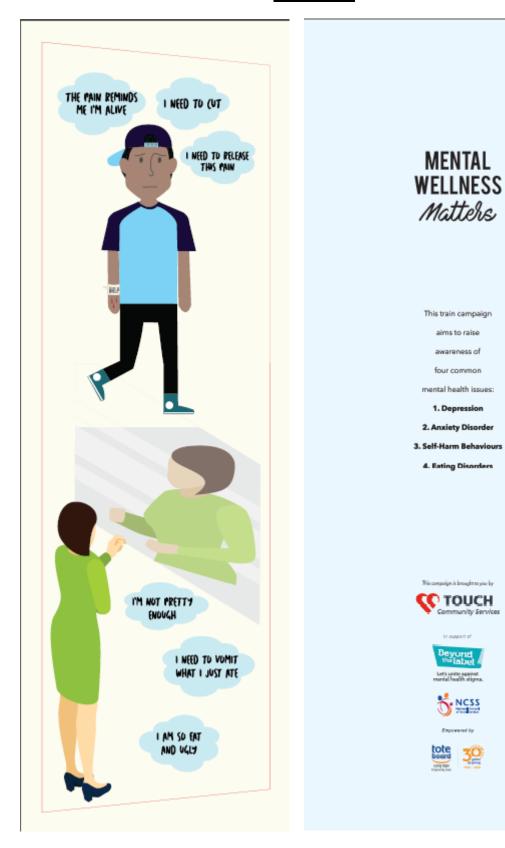
DON'T GIVE UP!

HELP IS Available.

YOU ARE VALUABLE!

TOGETHER, WE STAND.

# **Connectors**



# **Connectors**





### **Connectors**



Help is

available

in our

community

This comparign is brought to you by



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Empowered to





