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English News

22

APR

MAKE HAPPINESS A PRIORITY



In this day and age, uncertainties have become as common as the global weather patterns. Brickbats and broomsticks are part of today's social interaction, as society becomes more competitive, while giving passing criticisms and being judgemental seem to be in the repertoire of many.

Stress therefore can creep and seep into everyone's psyche just as immediately. Being able to maintain composure and to remain calm and happy is a character that many struggle to achieve amidst all the chaos and disruptions. Even the head of the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) has been quoted as saying: "Paying more attention to happiness should be part of our efforts to achieve both human and sustainable development."



This is what spurred the USM School of Educational Studies (PIP) Master in Counselling candidate, Ng Lei Voon, together with her fellow candidates, to initiate a project called "Happiness Project" from 10-14 April this year. It was in the form of a survey, with the replies put on sticky notes. She stated that the project was meant to promote awareness on World Mental Health Day (7 April) and to help in fostering the Happiness Index. The theme for World Mental Health Day this year is 'Depression: Let's Talk'.

Lei Voon quoted findings from the World Health Organisation (WHO), in stating that depression is common among 15-29 year-olds. The website medicalnewstoday.com said that it is the most common illness worldwide, and a leading cause of disability. The American Psychiatric Association also mentioned that depression can affect anyone, even a person who appears to live in relatively ideal circumstances.

This was the reason why Lei Voon initiated this project, due to the prevalence of depression. At the same time, she is also hoping to offer help to those concerned on how to achieve happiness in their lives, at the same time promoting the awareness on mental health.

From her findings at the project site, she discovered that USM students have basic and simple but genuine needs such as the need for food and sleep, spending time with loved ones, doing things they like, and having (more) freedom. Thus, she said that she and her colleagues would be conducting counselling services and psychological testing sessions at different academic schools in USM for those needing them.

The website dailyhealthgen.com has provided a few tips on how to stop worrying. In order to reduce the symptoms of depression, the steps to take include:

- going for regular exercises such as aerobics
- getting enough rest and sleep
- eating a healthy diet
- avoiding alcohol (a depressant)

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Disediakan oleh: Kaunselor-Kaunselor Pelatih, Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Pendidikan (2016/2017)

There are several treatments available for those suffering from different stages of depression. Among the more common ones would be the use of prescribed medication, psychotherapy and electroconvulsive therapy.

Mayoclinic.org has also suggested alternative treatments, namely taking supplements such as omega-3 fatty acids and St John's wort, going for aerobics, practicing relaxation techniques such as yoga or taichi, joining music or art therapy sessions and also becoming more involved in spiritually-oriented activities.

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