

WE CARE NEWS



Counselling | Therapy Programme | Drop-in Centre | Recovery Support Group | Events & Activities

Prepare to melt ❄️ ❄️ For our Charity movie Frozen 2

Save the 1st day of the school holidays for this cool adventure ❄️



❄️

THE SEQUEL TO FROZEN, THE 2ND HIGHEST GROSSING ANIMATION FILM OF ALL TIME. SIX YEARS IN THE MAKING, FROZEN 2 REUNITES PRINCESSES ELSA AND ANNA, ICE HARVESTER KRISTOFF, SNOWMAN OLAF AND SVEN THE REINDEER.

❄️

EXPECT SONGS, JOY, LAUGHTER, ADVENTURE, AND LOTS OF SNOW AND ATTITUDE !

Inside this issue:

FROZEN 2

❄️

WHAT WE CARE DOES WITH DONATIONS

A CONVERSATION ON GAMING ADDICTION

RECOVERY STORY: BRENDA

MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS: YAN HAN

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RECENT ACTIVITIES

GIVE TO WE CARE

FROZEN 2 WILL SCREEN AT SHAW LIDO 1 ON MON 25TH NOV AT 6.45 PM

Frozen 2 happens on Mon 25th Nov at Shaw Lido Hall 1, 6.45pm



Scan this QR code to donate at giving.sg

Come and support **WE CARE** and the recovering community we treat.

Every donation of \$50 gives you a ticket to this family entertainment, and helps a recovering person and their family get their lives back.

Each \$50 donation will qualify for a \$250 tax deduction.

How to donate:

1. Go to giving.sg and search **WE CARE**. Click on Our Campaigns. Alternatively, scan the QR code on the left. It will take you to:
<https://www.giving.sg/we-care-community-services-limited/frozen2>
1. Email us at publicity@wecare.org.sg
2. Call us at 6547 5459
3. Message us on our FaceBook page at www.facebook.com/WeCareCommunityServices/

What We Do With Your Donations

Your donations directly support counselling treatments, programmes and provide support for individuals and families affected by addiction.

Here are the main treatment programmes offered by **WE CARE**:

SOAR

This programme treats substance and alcohol addicts and their families.

GRIP

Gambling addicts and their families benefit from this programme.

IGA

Those with problem Internet and gaming issues get help here.

SPLA

This treatment is for sex, porn and love addiction issues.

ATO

This programme treats Atypical Theft Offending, more commonly recognized as Shoplifting.

Family & Friends

This support group helps the families and close ones of recovering persons to better support their loved ones. It also covers issues such as self-care and defining boundaries.

WE CARE AIMS TO BE A LEADING ADDICTION TREATMENT AND EDUCATION CENTRE.



WE CARE accepts persons of all races, cultures and beliefs.

We are particularly mindful of helping those in lower and middle income families.

To find out more about **WE CARE** and our programmes, go to our website at www.wecare.org.sg

Gaming and Internet Addiction: A Conversation

The following chat takes place between volunteer Cian Delahunty and **WE CARE** counsellor Chai Binhua. Full disclosure – both are regular Internet users and game players themselves

Gaming is a pastime that has evolved significantly over the years. Video games are becoming increasingly immersive, longer, and more sophisticated.

Gaming is an especially popular phenomenon in Singapore. In a study by Limelight Network, Singapore was found to be the country where gamers spend the most time consecutively playing video games, at an average of 1.56 hours.

In addition, the study found that 51% of Singaporean gamers have skipped out on sleep, over 38.2% have missed a meal and 31.4% have missed a shower, just to game. In light of these results, gaming addiction has attracted a lot of attention.

Volunteer Cian sat down with Binhua in a discussion to shed some light on gaming addiction.

Cian: Binhua, what causes people to become addicted to gaming?

Binhua: Game design has evolved over the years. Games are often designed to be as addictive as possible. In fact, some popular mobile games are specifically marketed this way; they imply that if the game is addictive, then it must be fun.



Examples of design features which can cause the player to continue playing are the graphics, progression system and difficulty level. Game graphics are often brightly coloured, dynamic and create a sense of excitement in the player. The game's progression system initially awards a player with large rewards, and then gradually makes these rewards progressively more difficult to receive, which causes the player to continue playing for the same level of satisfaction.

The game designers also have the general skill level of the population in mind. They change the difficulty of their games to be just challenging enough to attract as many players as possible.

These design features act as hooks for people to continue playing these games.

In addition to these hooks, games usually maximize the pull of the game by integrating it into the player's daily routine. Designers can create daily or even hourly quests for rewards, which motivate the player to come back and play the game once if not multiple times throughout the day.

This routine gradually integrates gaming into the player's life, and it can become one of their highest priorities, after all, feeling good can be just a click away.

Cian: How is it that several friends can game at similar levels, and perhaps just one of them will develop a gaming addiction?

Binhua: There exist certain predispositions to gaming addiction. A gamer may be more likely to develop an addiction if they do not feel fulfilled in their day-to-day life.





Recovery Journey

Brenda shares

You wouldn't know it when you meet this vivacious and energetic person, but Brenda has had a constant struggle with drug addiction for years. What nearly shattered her though was the psychosis fuelled by her use of methamphetamine.

The psychosis that came along with it made her perceive that she was constantly being followed, and caused her to become very paranoid.

She started isolating herself from others, while still denying any degree of addiction. People started telling her how they could no longer recognise her, as her appearance changed drastically.

In 2018, a close friend saw the severity of the situation, and finally checked her into NAMS that same year.

On the seventh day of detoxification — a treatment method employed to remove toxins from the narcotics consumed — Brenda experienced withdrawal symptoms so unbearable, she had to be hospitalised.

This was her first near-death experience.

To make matters worse, her mother passed away while she was still warded. When Brenda was finally discharged, she relapsed immediately, giving in to the meth once more, simply because she did not think

Her condition made her lose touch with reality – to the extent where she was deemed a danger to herself, and hospitalisation was necessary.

But thanks to the help she received from **WE CARE** and the National Addictions Management Service (NAMS), Brenda eventually fought her demons.

Psychosis – A Devastating Condition That Never Leaves

Brenda never felt she had a problem with addiction, and always believed that she was able to handle herself while on drugs.

For the past twenty years, she has always maintained control. But things started to spiral in 2014 when she took crystal meth or 'ice'.

about the consequences. Nor that it would once again uproot her life. But it did.

With her mother gone, she lived alone and her battles with addiction returned. Attending classes for a diploma course proved challenging as psychosis made it difficult for her to distinguish delusion from reality.

Not wanting to give up, she persevered to complete her studies and to prove that she could finish what she started.

But by the end of 2018, Brenda's psychosis had become so severe that her brother's only choice was to bring in the police. He feared she was a danger to herself.

History repeated itself – she was hospitalised in October and then admitted to NAMS again.

However, this time it was different, as she was determined to kick off the addiction for good. Interaction with fellow patients gave her the opportunity to relate her experiences and this was crucial in helping her get discharged successfully.



But it was the fear of knowing how easy it was for relapse to occur again that pushed her to seek help at **WE CARE** after NAMS.

There, things changed for the better. She found the support and treatment she had never experienced before.

Her peers at the centre were genuine and non-judgemental, and they gave her the warmth that made her feel welcome. They took their time with her, never once pushing her into opening up when she was not ready.

It was a slow process, yet they were determined to aid her in overcoming her addiction. Brenda realised that this was a place where she could find joy in life again, but more importantly a place where it was safe to share her experiences and receive the support she never had before.

Brenda could not be more proud of being her best version of herself today — a Brenda with newfound confidence and self-esteem.

At the centre's support group meetings, like-minded individuals with similar struggles provided her an avenue to articulate her issues. This paved the way for her to make new friends.

To this day these are the very same people she spends most of her time with.

Small Steps Each Day, A Huge Achievement for a Lifetime

Constantly being involved in support group meetings, and in activities with her new friends in and out of the centre, drugs no longer consume every aspect of her life. Being in the presence of others with readily available help has been effective in giving her the support to stay clean.

The thought process of weighing the consequences of going back to drugs, introduced by her counsellor, is effective in distancing herself from them.

With drugs out of her life, she no longer suffers from psychosis. These are the tools Brenda uses daily to stay on the right track.

These days, she seldom has triggering thoughts and has been living her new drug-



Brenda at a recent baking class at **WE CARE**, here with her teammates.

free life for close to a year.

In fact, Brenda will be celebrating her one year mark this month (October 2019).

Gentle reader, if you have come this far, it may come as a surprise to you that Brenda is a transgender woman. You may well wonder if her gender identity has made it difficult for her to seek addiction treatment. Fortunately, she has never once felt discriminated against when she sought help. The staff at IMH treated her like any other patient, and **WE CARE** hosts Narcotics Anonymous support groups for LGBTQ individuals (LGBTQ-NA).

Professionalism is always key to addiction recovery. Brenda has been a recipient of treatment in the most welcoming of ways, and is deeply appreciative of how accessible **WE CARE** has proven itself to be, accepting anyone regardless of orientation or gender identity.

Brenda is now proud to revisit NAMS and **WE CARE** with a very different purpose - offering her support to newcomers battling their addiction. The once timid and shy girl would never have imagined she would one day befriend strangers and be their guiding light, or address a room full of people.

She stays humble about the good she's giving back to the community, but could not be more proud of being her best version of herself today - a Brenda with newfound confidence and self-esteem.

Brenda's journey is related by volunteer Fred Chin, a psychology postgraduate from the University of Glasgow who has a passion for understanding human behaviour through a scientific approach.

Gaming and Internet Addiction: A Conversation ...

While real financial and social success requires hard work and sustained efforts, games provide a simulation of this success that is far more easily achievable, instantaneous and convenient.

They do this by making the player feel competent, powerful and free within the game. In addition, the steps to →

achieving their goals within the game are laid out and they can be assured these will lead to success.

Furthermore, if gamers lack real-life relationships that are supportive and meaningful, gaming provides a means to satisfy their sense of achievement or connection that is more predictable or easily achievable. If these social connections are not present within a gamer's life, they may rely on games to suppress their need for them, or to find a virtual version of these relationships.



Cian: When is a gamer considered to be an addict?

Binhua: At the World Health Organization's World Health Assembly in May 2019, members formally recognised gaming addiction as an official condition.

This finalises the draft released last year in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD). Now in its 11th edition, the WHO's ICD serves as the international standard for diagnosing and treating health conditions (see box below).

Cian: What are some of the negative impacts of gaming addiction?

Binhua: 'Servicing' (spending time on) a game can be as brief as 15 seconds. However, to an addict, those few seconds are but the start to a whole day of clearing quest after quest, game after game.

Because of this, gaming consumes a lot of time in the addict's life. Some can spend up to 10-15 hours gaming every day. Unfortunately, this doesn't leave any time for exercise or productive hobbies that allow the body to stay healthy.

Gamers may also neglect to eat meals, or eat only basic, unhealthy food, resulting in poor physical health. Poor hygiene is another potential consequence; not many addicts want to spend time cleaning themselves when they could be gaming.

Also, if insufficient time is spent connecting with those around them, real-world relationships may deteriorate, such as those with family. This may worsen the addiction, as the addict becomes closed off from those who can help them with their problem. (To be continued in our next newsletter)

This article was contributed by Cian Delahunty who is taking a gap year, and aims to pursue a degree in either marine science, bus-driving or psychology.

The WHO's ICD

Gaming disorder, whether online or offline, is characterized by a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour that is manifested by:

1. impaired control over gaming (e.g., onset, frequency, intensity, duration, termination, context);
2. increasing priority given to gaming to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other life interests and daily activities; and
3. continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences. The behaviour pattern is of sufficient severity to result in significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

The pattern of gaming behaviour may be continuous or episodic and recurrent. The gaming behaviour and other features are normally evident over a period of at least 12 months in order for a diagnosis to be assigned, although the required duration may be shortened if all diagnostic requirements are met and symptoms are severe.

Meet Our Volunteers

Yan Han talks about her volunteering experience at **WE CARE**



Yan Han (left) and student Enid.

The road to recovery may seem daunting, but to **WE CARE** volunteer Teo Yan Han, any obstacle can be overcome — one need only be willing to take it one step at a time.

The 21-year old business management undergraduate at the Singapore Management University (SMU) knows this well, having recently marked her first year as a volunteer with **WE CARE**, where she teaches English and smartphone literacy skills to its beneficiaries.

“Most of the demand for smartphone lessons came from the slightly older generation,” she said. “As many things have become digitalised, smartphone usage has become essential to daily living. It is imperative that we learn how to operate them to keep up with the world today.”

Yan Han has been volunteering since her teens, though she only came to know about **WE CARE** while at SMU, where completing at least 80 hours of community service is required for graduation.

“I was considering between tutoring primary school kids or persons in recovery. But I felt that primary school kids were more privileged as there are always teachers that could help them out, so I ended up choosing the latter.”

She draws meaning from her interactions with the

students at **WE CARE**, who despite being older than her, are driven to learn beyond their comfort zone, equipping themselves with skill sets that can be put to good use, especially when they begin to find employment and integrate back into the community.

Recently, Yan Han began teaching the basics of English Literature to a 50-year-old student. She is the student with whom Yan Han has journeyed the longest, and who plans to sit for the GCE O-Level examinations in 2020.

“She is very keen to learn, and it warms my heart that she is taking one step at a time to continue her studies.”

Another student at her smartphone

class left an equally indelible and sweet impression.

“She only managed to attend one class because of scheduling issues. However, every time she sees me now, she will make me a cup of Milo or bring me something that she has made during her baking classes. Even though it’s a very simple gesture, it never fails to make me feel at home!”

Yan Han has never had a personal encounter with addiction, though her father’s strong drinking habit gave her a taste of how an innocent habit could turn harmful, when taken to the extreme.

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Yan Han spends time with kangaroo

Meet Our Volunteers ...

While his penchant for alcohol may not classify as severe, it has led to negative consequences, she said.

"Family members should always seek a helpline* where possible," she advised. Next to coming down to an addiction centre like **WE CARE**, she believes "many would be more comfortable with calling helplines anonymously, especially if they are not sure how to approach such issues."

Since volunteering with **WE CARE**, she has learnt that for persons in recovery, it is not just about learning to curb the addiction, but also re-integration into the community.

While **WE CARE** provides counselling and holistic recovery programmes that help cope with addictions, it also facilitates a wide array of training that allows recovering individuals to learn skills for personal improvement and to become

workplace-ready.

Recovery is a long and winding road, but as Yan Han can attest to, they do not walk alone at **WE CARE**.

"The staff here are dedicated and give their all, while my students here are also very receptive and friendly. It's like having many family members, who can help pull you along whenever obstacles arise."

Interviewed by volunteer Andrew Lim, who is currently trying to lose weight.

Note **WE CARE's** hotline 6547 5459 is available Mondays to Fridays from 10am to 7pm. After hours, calls go to voicemail, which will be retrieved the next day of operation

Recent activities and events

Outreach at Hindu Centre



Flamingoes at Jurong Bird Park

Visiting artist Annie Anthony



Shanghai Drug Treatment Centre visits WE CARE



Visit to Jurong Bird Park



Joyliss at Bettr Barista with filmmaker Joy and colleague

Transforming Lives .. Restoring Families



Counselling | Therapy Programme | Drop-in Centre | Recovery Support Group | Events & Activities



We are located at:

Kembangan-Chai Chee
Community Hub
11 Jln Ubi #01-41, Block 5
Singapore 409074
Tel : 65475459
Fax : 65475458
E-mail: help@wecare.org.sg

WE CARE aims to be a leading centre for the transformation of persons with addiction.

We treat all forms of addictions, including alcohol, drugs, pornography, sex, gaming, internet and compulsive behavior like shoplifting.

Our 4 core services are:

- Counselling for recovering addicts and their families
- Educational and therapy programmes
- A drop-in centre
- Recovery support groups

For more information on what we do, please go to:
www.wecare.org.sg

Counselling sessions are private and confidential.



WE CARE needs your help.

WE CARE Community Services Ltd is a registered charity organisation. We provide treatment for all forms of addictions and our services are open to people of all races, cultures and religion.

We depend mainly on donations from individuals and corporations to fund our programmes and services. Your support enables us to provide quality care for individuals and families affected by addictions and compulsive behaviours.

As we are an approved Institution of Public Character (IPC), donations to WE CARE are tax deductible,

To make a donation:

Write a cheque payable to "WE CARE Community Services Limited". Alternatively, go online to make a donation at:

- Giving.sg/we-care-community-services-limited; or
- Wecare.give.asia



Help is just a phone call away

If you have a problem with addiction, or if you know someone who has issues, call us at 65475459. Or email help@wecare.org.sg

**In order to get what we want,
we must be prepared to give up what we don't.**