

# WE CARE NEWS



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

## Life in the time of the coronavirus

**This circuit breaker edition of our newsletter is a work of love by members of our recovering community, including staff, volunteers, donors and above all, our beneficiaries.**

**We share stories, poetry, recipes, reflections, advice, and more to show you how we can cope.**



**WE CARE**  
COMMUNITY SERVICES



## A message from **WE CARE**

Since 7<sup>th</sup> April, we've had to close our Drop-in centre, in line with the Covid-19 circuit breaker measures. Though we have maintained safe physical distance thus far, I'm very happy to know that you continue to stay connected online – some through our daily lunchtime support group meetings or SMART; others via the women therapy group or Family & Friends meetings.

We are all living in unprecedented times now, learning to adjust to life as we've never experienced before. If we continue to stay connected and support each other through these times, I am confident we will each come out feeling proud that we have managed through one of the toughest periods in our living history.

Alone, we will feel the challenges of isolation, but collectively we may find the going easier. Some may even thrive as they discover new strengths in themselves and new connections with others. To create space and opportunity for that, we are launching for the first time a newsletter by members for members. A safe space for fellow recovering persons to share your secret recipes, one-of-a-kind strategies or handicrafts to keep the blues away or simply that special poem, movie or song that brings the sparkle to your day. I hope you will make meaningful use of this space for connection and exchange.

Finally, we wish all our Muslim friends a joyous start to the month of Ramadan. And good health and peace of mind for all of you and your loved ones at home!

In safety and good health,

Yuen Han



## Expressing Ourselves Through Art



### Two Weeks

Acrylic and marker on canvas (2020)

During this circuit breaker, I've been painting about my experience in NAMS. For me, the two weeks of rehab away from my substance, my triggers - family, friends, phone, internet, social media, etc - was a much-needed break. Perhaps, it was a circuit breaker too in my vicious cycle of addiction that I was stuck in for years. The two weeks were not easy but I was well taken care of and got to know many fellow addicts who are just like me.



Many a time patients would give up and leave the program before their two weeks were up. I nearly did too but luckily, my counsellor gave me time to think it over and I decided to stay another day. I still think about the wonderful people I met in my stay there, and wonder how they are today and pray they are safe in their journey.

I feel very grateful now that in this Covid-19 situation; we may be isolated but we're not alone. We have recovery-focused Zoom meetings, WhatsApp chat groups and new friends and family to support one another.

So... 4 weeks, plus another 4 more, it's not easy but let's take it one day at a time!

**Marla**

### There Will Be Light

Acrylic on Canvas (2020)

**Marn**

This artwork reveals light filtering in when we start to heal in our journey of recovery.



## When the circuit breaker ‘tripped’: A guide to staying sane during COVID

As I write, this is now the third week since the ‘Circuit Breaker’ (CB) tripped nationwide. And we are told that it will not flip back on for four more weeks, not until 1 June, and only if the Covid storm calms down to single-digit cases.

This is a very challenging situation for the recovering community, especially for our beneficiaries. Isolation is bad news for them. You see, for many, isolation was the key – the cause that led to their addiction to drugs, alcohol, gaming, online gambling, pornography and other compulsive behaviours such as online shopping.

We encourage recovering folks, as part of the recovery programme, to connect and bond with fellow recoverees through activities and outings, through participation in programmes and through attendance at support group meetings. Unfortunately, when CB happened, all these ground to a standstill at our centre.



Distancing and isolation suddenly became the order of the day. Our beneficiaries found themselves in the situation that they feared most – being alone with their own shadows, with flashbacks of their using days and for some, the childhood trauma that they had suffered.

What can they do? They can turn of course, turn to us, to seek support via WhatsApp, Skype or Zoom or simply to check in through a good old telephone call.

Thankfully, we have managed to very quickly organize counselling sessions with the strong commitment of our staff. Many key programmes and support group meetings have migrated online.

To stay sane and healthy at home, my advice for beneficiaries on their own would be fourfold.

**One** Create a structure around your daily life – a daily timetable, to mark down the time to wake up and sleep, meetings and programmes to attend, meal times, exercise times, relaxation times and so on.

**Two** Express gratitude. Tell the people in your lives what you are grateful for and why. Gratitude helps us feel more positive emotions; it improves our emotional health; it allows us to deal with adversity, and it enables us to build stronger, more resilient relationships.

**Three** Reflection. Before you sleep, calmly review what has happened in the day. Ask yourself what you said and what you did, and most importantly, why. And think about how it affected other people.

**Four** Maintain connections. Continue to keep in touch with others who are in recovery, with your guides, and with your counsellor. And of course with friends, and family members. Sometimes it may just be a hello, or a check-in, but other times, you might just want to share a little more.

Remember that by being apart, but together, as part of a larger community, we will ride out this dark period of our times, and bright light will emerge once again soon.

**Yvonne**

## Food, Glorious Food

### Eggless Orange Cake

An easy recipe that I make when I'm feeling low.  
The tangy flavour perks me up !

#### Dry ingredients

All purpose flour or cake flour 1 ½ cups  
Baking soda ½ teaspoon  
Salt ½ teaspoon

#### Wet ingredients

Plain yogurt ½ cup  
Orange juice ½ cup  
Castor sugar or brown sugar 1 cup  
Vegetable oil 6 tablespoons  
Orange zest ½ teaspoon  
Vanilla extract ½ teaspoon (optional)

1. Sieve all the dry ingredients in a bowl .
2. In another bowl, add all the wet ingredients. And mix them till well combined .
3. Gradually add the dry mixture to the wet mixture.
4. Mix till the dry mixture is well combined.  
Don't mix for more than 1 minute as your cake may get dense .
5. Bake your cake in a preheated oven @ 180 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes.

Run a tooth pick or a knife in the centre of the cake. If it comes out clean, your cake is ready.  
Remember to line your cake tin with parchment paper and butter.



This recipe also makes 24 cupcakes. Cupcakes would only need 20-25mins.

And yes, sugar is not a wet ingredient, but go ahead and mix it in anyway. You can always use a blender to blend all your wet ingredients too.

For extra excitement, I sometimes add chocolate chips or rainbow sprinkles,

**Kessler**

### Hero by Mariah Carey

This is my recovery song.

I find that there is a hero in everyone's heart. The lyric tells us everything ....

[www.youtu.be/0IA3ZvCkRkQ](http://www.youtu.be/0IA3ZvCkRkQ)

**Brenda**

Happy Labour Day to Everyone! Undoubtedly, Covid-19 has definitely impacted the lives of many people in different countries and communities. However, what history has proven to mankind is that every crisis brings opportunities! Let us all use this time to work on self-care and equip ourselves with skills to make ourselves better inhabitants of Earth! Take care and stay safe everyone

**Gerald**

## More Food

### Fried Lotus Root

My partner bought a lotus root from the supermarket recently for us to try, something we haven't cooked before. I looked up a recipe online and found a simple one which I altered slightly.

It involved thinly slicing the root and frying on high heat for a few minutes with stock, ginger and bok choy - but I used red cabbage.

The dish tasted delicious and will be better again the next time I cook it - but what surprised me most was the flavour and texture of eating the lotus root reminded me of being a child holidaying at the beach!

It took me back to the mid 80's. As part of an Aussie BBQ we would have thinly sliced potatoes cooked on the grill. I could even remember how the BBQ area was set up, the play equipment close by and my friends I made every year.

The charcoal flavour and crunchiness took me back over 30 years ago!

I would never have thought a typical Asian root vegetable cooked in our 1-bedroom apartment in Singapore could take an Australia lad back to his younger years eating a BBQ at the beach!

I look forward to my partner bringing home another different vegetable or meat to see where the next meal might take us!

**Brett**



Editor's impression of what Brett's dish should look like



### Steamed Lettuce Leaves with Oyster Sauce

Easy peasy – just take a bunch of iceberg lettuce leaves and steam for five minutes.

Drizzle over with oyster sauce (or abalone/scallop sauce if you have it) and some sesame oil, and enjoy.

**Andrew**



## Some More Food



### Huevos Rancheros (Rancher's Eggs)

This easy and tasty breakfast meal serves two

- 1 Tablespoon of Olive Oil
- ½ Red Onion, Thinly Sliced
- Salt and Pepper
- ½ Medium Clove of Garlic, Minced
- Small Pinch of Dried Cumin
- 2 eggs
- ½ Can Peeled Tomatoes
- ½ Can of Kidney Beans, Drained and Rinsed
- Corn Tortillas
- ¼ Cup of Cilantro (or other vegetable)
- ¼ Avocado

Heat the oil in a 12-inch skillet over medium-high heat until hot. Add the onions and a pinch of salt and cook until softened, about 2 minutes. Add the garlic, jalapenos and cumin and cook until fragrant and softened, about 30 seconds more.

Add the tomatoes and allow to cook until they soften, then break them apart with a wooden spoon or potato masher.

Adjust the heat to maintain a vigorous boil, seasoning to taste, and cook until thickened, 8 to 10 minutes.

Lower the heat, stir in the beans and then make wells in the sauce and add the eggs into them.

Cover and cook until the whites have set, about 5 minutes.

Divide the tortillas among 4 plates and carefully ladle the eggs along with the bean and tomato mixture.

Top with cilantro and served with limes and avocado slices.

Pita bread can be substituted for the tortillas, as shown in the photo.

### Cian



Jenny shares recipes with her friends every day so she can cook a variety of food during the circuit breaker period.

*On the left Vietnamese glass noodles.*

*On the right, Korean beef noodles.*

This group of friends helps me to cook something different almost every day.



### Jenny

## Yet More Food

### Banana Upside Down Cake

Many of us have taken to baking to pass the time away and relieve stress. My new favourite recipe goes really well with vanilla ice cream! Here's the recipe and I hope you try it!

#### Topping

4 tbsp butter  
½ cup brown sugar  
4 bananas

#### Cake

1½ cup plain flour  
1½ teaspoon baking powder  
¾ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon  
115g butter (½ block)  
¾ cup castor sugar  
2 large eggs  
½ cup milk  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. First make the caramel topping by melting butter and sugar in a saucepan over medium heat. Once it bubbles, remove from the heat. Leave to cool slightly then pour on to a round cake tin. Make sure the caramel covers the base of the tin. Cut the bananas lengthwise into half and arrange over the caramel.
2. Preheat the oven to 180°C
3. Whisk the dry ingredients (flour, baking powder, salt and cinnamon) together in a bowl.

Don't let social distance lead to emotional distance. Reach out, open up, let people in. We may not be able to be with each other right now, but we can still be there for each other.

**Helenna**



4. In another bowl, using a wooden spatula, cream butter and sugar till light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time and continue to mix well. Then add the milk and vanilla into this cake batter.
5. Pour the dry ingredients into the cake batter and mix well. The batter is quite thick. Scoop the batter over the bananas in the cake tin and gently smooth it so that it is even. Bake in oven for 30-35 mins.

Remove, cool and serve with ice cream!

#### Kim

Empathy has no script. There is no right way or wrong way of doing it. It's simply listening, holding space, withholding judgment, emotionally connecting and communicating that incredibly healing message of "You're not alone".

- Brené Brown

**TED Talks enthusiast**



## Food Encore



### Easy Teriyaki Chicken

Easy recipe I learnt from Tasty's 3-ingredient meals on YouTube which are very helpful when working and cooking on your own.

Take 300g of your favourite boneless chicken parts, and fry them on both sides until browned, on high heat. (If using thighs, add very little oil as the chicken fat itself will give out oil.)

Turn down the heat and add about 5 tablespoons of light soy sauce and coat the chicken on both sides, then squeeze in about 2-3 tablespoons of liquid honey or put in 2 tablespoons of sugar - just enough to balance the sweetness. And please taste - if too salty, add more honey/sugar and if too sweet, add more soy sauce.

Then, cover and braise on low heat.

For chicken thighs, braise for about 15 minutes, for chicken breasts, 7 minutes should be enough. Cut with a knife to check that everything is cooked through. If still red in the middle, cook a little longer.

Serve with steamed vegetables like broccoli, sliced carrots and cauliflower

**Andrew**

Wisdom is knowing I am nothing.  
Love is knowing I am everything.  
And between the two my life moves.

- Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

It resonates with me because I think recovery is partly about smashing the ego self ... of us thinking we know it all but ending up ruining our lives... and then learning to love again. Really, if you do not empty yourself of your old beliefs — the ones that are warped and painful — you cannot access the light and love.

**Marn**

When reading the article [on WE CARE] that was recently published on CNA, I was reminded how important connection to others is. It also brought an immense sense of hope that no matter what's going on around us, help is available once we become willing to reach out for it. There's no shame in asking for help and a helping hand is always available. In fact, we should all encourage one another to ask for help more often. Maybe instead of asking: How are you?, we should all be asking: Do you need any help?

**Dee**

A grateful addict will never use again. For more than three decades of using, I was never appreciative and always complaining. Today I am grateful for being able to accept my past and to move on.

**Enid**

## Staying Positive during Covid



Covid-19 is well and truly upon us and these are some very confusing times we are living in currently. As a 90's kid, I never thought I would experience any global phenomenon in this lifetime. It takes me back to growing up, listening to stories about the war from my grandparents and living a life where the uncertainty was high and freedom was a luxury.

When all this first started, I experienced similar emotions. What took me by surprise though was the constant comparison that was prevalent on social media. Influencers and celebrities had taken to social media advocating for individuals to pick up new skills, or offering suggestions to constantly be productive and not “waste this time”. Organisations were moving activities online, advertising the convenience of immediate access and encouraging everyone to stop making excuses for not doing things.

I had even come across images and articles that openly talked about how lazy individuals would be perceived if they had come out of this quarantine with no new skills acquired. While seemingly well-intentioned, it seemed to perpetuate the notion that only by being productive can anyone be considered

successful during this pandemic. This took an additional toll on people's mental health, even if just based on the conversations I had with peers and colleagues. A while later, this quote started circulating on the internet, summing up concisely how mental health should be given just as much priority.

This quote really resonated with me, advocating for the fact that “It is okay to not be okay” and that it is okay to take this time to rest both mentally and physically. It might just be time to pause, reset and refresh. Amidst all the negativity in the news constantly, what really keeps me going during this period are the articles I stumble across about individuals offering assistance by any means possible to those struggling during this pandemic.

These positive articles are so heartwarming to read and it is comforting to see society band together and how positive humanity can be when we try. Recently, I read about an NTU student who had made the risky move of starting up a fried beehoon stall only to see it shut due to Covid-19. 20-year-old Lee Ray Sheng chose instead to channel his business efforts into community service, setting out to deliver 15,000 fried beehoon breakfasts to needy families. With a few schoolmates, they set up a fund-raising campaign and received overwhelming support

from award-winning chefs offering their skills and time, to individuals making monetary donations to an extremely generous donation of 1,000 kg of beehoon. From their humble beginnings, they now aim to deliver at least 50,000 meals for needy families by June 1st. This story is amongst many now circulating about individuals who put society first and do their best to help in any way possible.

So, during such confusing times, let us all choose to spread love, light and positivity, in small ways or big.

Check up on family and friends, take some time to ourselves and help each other to get through this.

**Sonam**

**It's a pandemic.  
Not a productivity contest.  
It's ok to not become  
the next Master Chef,  
to build washboard abs,  
or to learn a language.  
If you don't want to.  
And great if you manage to.  
Whatever works for you.  
Either way, it's ok.  
This is a difficult time.  
Go easy on yourself.**

## Poetry, Stories, ... more



### Together

There is no hope.  
It is a lie that,  
Someone is here for me.  
I believe that,  
I am alone.  
Stop thinking,  
People care about you.  
The truth is that,  
Covid is uncontrolled.  
It is foolish to presume that,  
We can trust each other.  
Our fate is that,  
all has gone wrong.  
Who is to say,  
Together we are strong.

Together we are strong  
Who is to say,  
All has gone wrong  
Our fate is that,  
We can trust each other.  
It is foolish to presume that,  
Covid is uncontrolled  
The truth is that,  
People care about you.  
Stop thinking,  
I am alone.  
I believe that,  
Someone is here for me.  
It is a lie that,  
There is no hope.

### Phum

*Read the second verse carefully.  
It is the reverse of the first.*

Always reach out to fellow buddies for  
a chat when we are not feeling good

### Derrick

Simply being with someone else and feeling recognized and heard is a relief for any of us. It lets us relax and recognize what our experience actually is. Therapy ... gives us a chance to slow down and let go of our habitual speediness enough to do some self-scrutiny and see "how we really are".

Karen Kissel Wegela, "The Courage To Be Present"

This is especially relevant during the current Covid situation where there is physical distancing, but we need, all the more so, to be socially connected by other means.

### Lina



## Poetry, Stories, ... more

### Stage

It was an ambush. They had found a flaw in what he thought was a perfect plan, a plan that he'd rehearsed, acted, and received applause for, a million times before. He failed to see that he himself was the actual flaw - the main star, the genius who wrote this perfect script worth a hundred Pulitzers, had proven that he had failed to see the big elephant in the room when everyone else had done so.

He was unable to recognise that in the end, even with different twists and plots and those glitzy props; they weren't enough to hide the fact that the storyline was simply getting tired and the backstage was falling apart. The Star has lost his sparkle. And then he suddenly gasped, as if he was waking up from a nightmare, sweat dripping down his face. 'It's not happening, it's not happening,' he said to himself as waves crushed the ceiling, finally revealing the dark sky filled with the monsters he had always been terrified of; the white old lady who steals his sweet dreams, replacing with nightmares; the faceless mimic who trails him like a shadow and a one-eyed monster who sucks in all the air so he suffocates. All of them, up there, staring right him and no, maybe he wasn't dreaming after all.

Along with the hurricane, they tore down his precious theater, peeling layer after layer and brick by brick, until finally what was left was this dilapidated gold-painted cage. He never thought that he would perform his very last performance in this cage. "What a fool I have been," he said to himself quietly.

It was tragic to see the poor guy standing in the middle of the stage, a cadaverous shell of a man with collapsing eyes, opaque skin and a broken soul. Oh, and the poor audience, they just sat silently, stoic like rows of Roman statues in a museum while all these calamities unfolded in front of their eyes.

Their eyes were resigned; impassive, detached, defeated and then the whole universe suddenly went dark as if God himself had taken back the gift of light – the singular gift that we humans often use to signify goodness, knowledge and hope.

And then he cried and cried, hoping that his ailing voice would guide someone to his rescue but all he could hear was his own voice. As fragile as it was, right there and then, he heard himself whispering: "Look at you, even the darkness has left you and all along you thought that you two were best friends."

**Irvin F**



### Useful Fashion

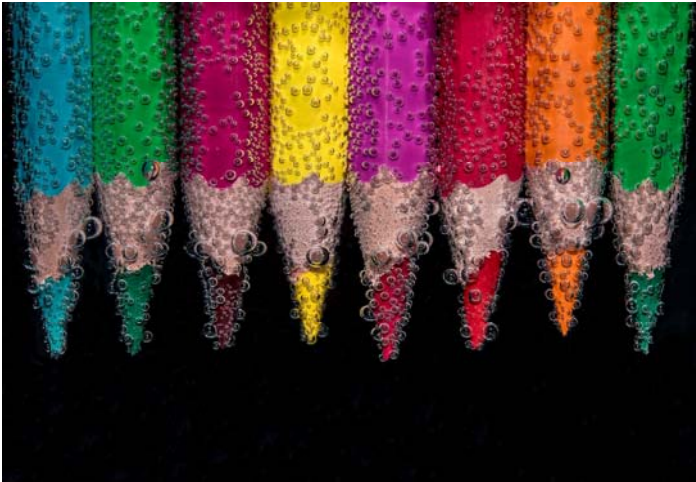
Some view fashion designers, or the fashion industry as skin-deep, where everything is about physical appearance and visual beauty. However, a group of designers from MODA (Malaysia Official Designers' Association) showed how creative persons and the fashion industry can contribute to the social well-being of the society.

The president of MODA, Melinda Looi, was tagged on Facebook with a picture of Malaysian medical staff cutting and sewing non-woven cloth on the floor to make them into PPEs (Personal Protective Equipment). She and other MODA members were shocked, as the medical frontliners should be saving lives and taking care of patients, not sewing! Led by Melinda, MODA has launched a campaign called "MODA for frontliners".

They conduct fund raising, and have collected more than RM300,000 for PPE materials. They have also engaged 60 local designers and home sewers to make PPEs for frontliners.

The doctors were astonished. Many doctors and nurses had never worn any

## Poetry, Stories, ... more



designer cuts before, and their first designer clothing was actually to be PPEs which they would put on to save lives.

The effort of producing PPEs and fund raising continues.

Coverage of "MODA for frontliners" can be found on YouTube and The Star.

**Yudian**

### The strangest moment in COVID

Headline on 24 Apr 2020:  
President Trump suggests injecting disinfectant as treatment.

**Jennifer**

(And apparently, many do.)

Sometimes the strength within you is not a big fiery flame for everyone to see. It is just a tiny spark that whispers ever so quietly:

"Keep going. You got this."

**Kim**

### Now That We Are All Zoombies

Pulse throbbing, Sid joined the Zoom meeting with Sales to see slide six of thirty-two; someone had sent him the wrong password. He strained to listen to the woman sharing her screen. Her words floated in and out of the speakers into his tiny home office, at times near and imminent, at others distant and garbled. Sid cranked up the volume. His temples ached.

He observed the meeting participants in gallery view: sixteen faces crammed onto a fourteen-inch screen. Sid found it hard to avoid looking at his own thumbnail. He felt self-conscious about the greying hair on his forehead but resisted the temptation to finger-comb. Shadow darkened half his face; he tilted his laptop towards the window to allow its camera to capture more light.

One thing was perfect about Sid's look in the meeting: the bookcase in the background. The neat rows of books added gravitas to his portrait, announcing: I am clever. Wait – what is that title on the second shelf? Sid enlarged his thumbnail and read, on the spine of a hardcover, American Porn. He froze. The book was in fact a sociological treatise. Sid turned off his video and stood up to remove the offensive book. He checked his expression - 'Good, nonchalant' - before turning the livestream back on.

Zoom background curation is an art form in the age of working from home. Image gurus say our faces should cover no more than a third of the screen and that we should show something of our homes. Like the act of placing our hands in view of the listener while talking, revealing part of our domestic environment improves trust; at least it avoids triggering



## Poetry, Stories, ... more

suspicion that one has something to hide. Zoom backgrounds are also opportunities to show personality and start conversation; 'You paint? Amazing!' Paying attention to what people see behind us is worth the effort; everyone is judging.

Sid could read from his colleagues' backdrops a more sombre message: differences in living conditions corresponding to job status. Clerks and assistants dialled in with shut bedroom doors and laundry hanging limply on over-door hooks. Was the absence of curation due to crammed flats or lower stakes in the workplace perception game? Middle managers used bare walls, or virtual backgrounds which turned fuzzy when the person moved. They too lacked physical space for staging but were undoubtedly image-conscious. Senior managers like Sid displayed books, drapes or neutral-toned wallpaper; tasteful, safe, 'Please Respect Me'. The CEO's backdrop showed the most variety: a glimpse of trees in the home garden, a see-through cabinet filled with antique clocks, the hypnotic geometry of a hanging Esfahan rug. In the WFH age, inequalities once concealable from the public view are revealed, consciously or not, through the scenes in which people log in.

At 6pm, Sid wanted to lie down. Every tele-conversation involved mentally checking: Are you listening? Was that a smile or a smirk? The chirping in someone's background - mynahs? Experts agree that online meetings are more draining. Our bodies expend more energy when processing electronic stimuli to make up for the absence of cues communicable in person. Researchers in fields from robotics to merchandising have long been aware of the psychological phenomenon of the uncanny: the experience of an object or image as strangely familiar (rather than simply mysterious) resulting in an anxious longing for the real thing. The phenomenon explains the unease we feel with ultra-realistic humanoid robots or CGI. Or the mannequins of sculptor Ron Mueck.

Our minds are said to be distressed by the potential confusion between human and replica, leading us to resist further exposure to the copy. Might the uncanny phenomenon be at work during a web conference? If so, our discomfort (from the pressure to respond to virtual faces as if they belonged to

people in the same room) is primal. Our body can suppress the discomfort – but for how long? Certainly, we are incredibly sensitive to seeing our own reflections. Stress levels rise when we must watch our own face while maintaining outward composure. Hence experts suggest taking breaks from video and 'showing up' via voice only. When we are not chained to posing as a living headshot, we breathe and concentrate better.

Ting! Another calendar notification: virtual Team Drinks! Sid drifted to his balcony, Zombie-like, orange juice in hand. He dialled and placed the phone on loudspeaker. As the office chatter invaded yet another corner of his home, Sid took a long sip and let the cold liquid fill his gut. A light breeze tickled his skin as eyebrows and shoulders softened at the rekindling of smell, taste and touch.

CS



### Favourite video:

#### Youngblood channel on YouTube

The Youngblood channel shows us the freedom of the human spirit. Back to nature and the great outdoors. Love and kindness for animals, nature and the environment. The open blue sea, the smell of adventure. The warm beautiful sun. The primal living of mankind: hunting, cooking and survival. And Mr Youngblood, Brodie Moss, has a big personality, and he is always accompanied by his faithful companion dog, Stryda.

[www.youtube.com/user/brodiemoss](https://www.youtube.com/user/brodiemoss)

Shabir



## Poetry, Stories, ... more

Here is the extract of the song "Courage" by Celine Dion. My idol and my go-to singer when I need a boost when my morale is down or when I just need a positive jolt to spur me on when going through difficult and trying times ....  
My guilty pleasure.

I would be lying if I said: "I'm fine"  
I think of you (Higher Power HP) at least a hundred times  
'Cause in the echo of my voice I hear your (HP) words  
Just like you're there  
I still come home from a long day,  
So much to talk about, so much to say,  
I love to think that we're still making plans

In conversations that'll never end...  
In conversations that'll never end...

Courage, don't you dare fail me now  
I need you to keep away the doubts  
I'm staring in the face of something new  
You're all I got to hold on to....  
So, courage, don't you dare fail me now

Not one to hide from the truth, I know  
It's outta my hands but I won't let you go  
There's no replacing the way you touched me...  
I still feel the rush.  
Sometimes it drowns me 'til I can't breathe  
Thinking it's only in our memories  
But, then I talk to you like I did then

All you need is already within you, only you must approach yourself with reverence and love. Self-condemnation and self-distrust are grievous errors. Your constant flight from pain and search for pleasure is a sign of the love you bear for yourself. All I plead with you is this – make love of your self perfect. Deny your self nothing. Give your self infinity and eternity and discover you do not need them. You are beyond.  
- Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

**Natasha**



In conversations that will never end  
Courage, don't you dare fail me now  
I need you to keep away the doubts  
I'm staring in the face of something new  
You're all I got to hold on to  
So, courage, don't you dare fail me now

'Cause it's not easy when you're not with me  
This world of madness goes faster now  
And it's a train wreck but I won't crash yet  
Long as your echo never fades out.....  
Courage, don't you dare fail me now

**Nudel**

Cooking should not be considered the domain of the expert, and perfectionism is the enemy of any kind of pleasure in the kitchen.

Adapted from Nigella Lawson, *How to Eat: The Pleasures and Principles of Good Food*

I am a big fan of the cook Nigella Lawson, not really because of her recipes but more because she believes strongly in enjoying the process of cooking in your own kitchen, and that you don't have to be a chef in order to do good cooking — nor strive for precision and perfection like many cooking shows and celebrity (usually male) chefs would tell you.

**Andrew**

## Poetry, Stories, ... more

I didn't understand the true meaning of this poem until I was in recovery. I was immersing myself in trying to figure out who is my reason (people who use me as a reason), who's my season (unimportant people who just come and go) and who I depended my life on.

So in recovery, this poem teaches me how to detach from people to avoid being unable to find answers and obsessing into negative thoughts.

### Reason, Season, or Lifetime

People come into your life for a reason, a season or a lifetime.

When you figure out which one it is, you will know what to do for each person.

When someone is in your life for a REASON, it is usually to meet a need you have expressed. They have come to assist you through a difficulty; to provide you with guidance and support; to aid you physically, emotionally or spiritually. They may seem like a godsend, and they are. They are there for the reason you need them to be.

Then, without any wrongdoing on your part or at an inconvenient time, this person will say or do something to bring the relationship to an end. Sometimes they die. Sometimes they walk away. Sometimes they act up and force you to take a stand. What we must realize is that our need has been met, our desire fulfilled; their work is done. The prayer you sent up has been answered and now it is time to move on.

Some people come into your life for a SEASON, because your turn has come to share, grow or learn. They bring you an experience of peace or make you laugh. They may teach you something you have never done. They usually give you an unbelievable amount of joy. Believe it. It is real. But only for a season.

LIFETIME relationships teach you lifetime lessons; things you must build upon in order to have a solid emotional foundation.

Your job is to accept the lesson, love the person, and put what you have learned to use in all other relationships and areas of your life. It is said that love is blind but friendship is clairvoyant.

Unknown

**Alvin**



One good thing that came out of Covid is that everyone looks better with half their faces covered.

**Fred**

Learning languages can be fun and you would be surprised to find out that the US Foreign Services Institute has put up courses for 72 foreign languages online. The FSI is where they train diplomats so they include languages from Arabic to Cambodian to Turkish. Amazingly they are all free and include notes and sound files. Not a lot of newer words or ideas like ecommerce or selfie, but thorough. From basic to advance levels.

[www.fsi-language-courses.net/fsi-language-courses/](http://www.fsi-language-courses.net/fsi-language-courses/). Also useful is app DuoLingo. Free on Android and Apple.

**Leslie**

## Thoughts and Reflections



### Enjoy your own company

When I was around 16 years old, my dad happened to mention this phrase during one of our conversations. Even though he said it in passing, it resonated heavily with me and still does to this day. He said that in life you need to enjoy your own company. It's such a simple phrase but the depth of its effect if carried out is immeasurable. It allows you to be alone and by yourself but without suffering from loneliness. There is great strength in being able to distinguish being alone from being lonely.

When I was using, I did not enjoy my own company. I did not like the person I was. But I know I am capable of enjoying my own company as I had been doing so for many years before I started using. So during my current recovery phase, I am slowly putting back the pieces of myself which I had removed to make room for drugs.

I was reckless when I was using, and had close to zero concern for the people around me whose feelings I had completely disregarded. I was unreliable, untrustworthy and irresponsible, not just to friends and family, but also to myself. And those were the aspects of my character at the time, that led me to hating my own company.

But I'm moving forward now. I'm beginning to trust myself again. I'm beginning to enjoy my own company.

**Oliver**

### My daily activities during 'lockdown'

Before Ramadan, the fasting month, I was not working so I started to do indoor exercises like planking, weights, sit-ups and push-ups in addition to housework.

I try to eat right.

What Covid brings to me is the message that I should do more inner self-reflection, about where we are, where we are heading, and who our real enemy is ....

Everyday, the most essential thing to me is to try and understand myself first before I attempt to understand others.

**Journeyman**

It's my story isn't it? I'm Puspa. 54 years old. I'm a recovering addict. I'm so glad now to be at WE CARE and I am happy with my life. No more suffering like before. Key words like 'Take one day at a time' and 'Keep coming back, it works' when I'm working on it. With all the support that is given to me, that's where I am now. I love playing music and I will never forget where I come from. It is so amazing that I have my longest recovery period here. I want people to know me by the name of Puspa. Thanks to everyone that welcomes me even though sometimes I have my ups and downs. No matter what happens to you in life, we have to move on. Thank you from a recovering addict. With lots of love and kisses.

**Puspa**



## Thoughts and Reflections

“Hi, my name is Sam (not my real name) and I am an addict.” This is my opening sentence when I attend recovery meetings.

As a gay man growing up in my family, I had to wear two masks my entire life, despite being born in a simple but happy family. After I completed my bachelor’s degree and started working, I began to explore my sexuality by meeting other gay men. I was introduced to meth during one of these sexual encounters and that left me with such an intense experience that I knew back then I would be addicted to this drug.

Time flies during addiction, and before I knew it, 18 years had passed. My addiction days have brought me many lows in my life — financial instability, several relationships that did not work out and distancing from my family. The addiction also destroyed all my dreams.

In March 2019, my ex-partner encouraged me to attend a recovery program organized by The Greenhouse and subsequently, I came to know about WE CARE and the programmes that it offers. I joined the programmes at both centres diligently, because I knew I badly needed to stop using drugs and lead a normal life.

At both places, I got to know other people with the same issues as me, and that makes me feel that I am not abnormal, and I am not alone any more. I have built a family by choice with these new friends, supporting each other in our recovery journey.

One of these programmes is the 12-Step: I was assigned a sponsor that guided me through it. It has allowed me to look back on my past, cherish my present and plan for my future. With these, I am well on my way to crafting a new life. I know I will need to battle this addiction disease for the rest of my life, but I know where to seek help and support now, so I will be fine.

Friends have asked me if I regret using drugs, but my reply is always, “Why regret the past? Life is too short to have many regrets. I will always take every experience as a learning lesson. 那里跌倒，那里爬起来 (Where you fall, you pick yourself up again).”

**Sam**



Fear is the memory of pain.  
Addiction is the memory of pleasure .

Freedom is beyond both

- Deepak Chopra

**Helenna**

My name is Tanaphum Pravichphibul and I am a 19-year-old Singaporean currently serving National Service. Now, you must be thinking “Hmm, that name does not really sound Singaporean...” and you are right! My paternal side is Thai, and I grew up in Thailand too, which gave me the privilege to know more about the Thai language and culture.

During my time at WE CARE, I volunteered as a Thai tutor and also to catalogue books, and I must say amongst my several volunteering experiences, my time at WE CARE was truly the most memorable. The community there is such a warm and friendly one, and I have met so many amazing and passionate individuals there too. Through the many lunches and even an excursion trip to Bollywood Veggie farm, I had so much fun talking and spending time in this community.

If given the opportunity in the future, I would definitely love to come back and volunteer again.

**Phum**

## Thoughts and Reflections

### Believe in yourself

9th April. 1859 hours. I received an email from Republic Polytechnic on my mobile phone. It was on my notifications. My heart skipped a beat, maybe two. A thousand thoughts and emotions ran through my mind. My body felt light. I decided to start my motorbike and head back home. I wanted to open the email at home with my wife.

20 minutes later, Leila and I were hugging, with tears in our eyes. I was accepted into Republic Poly to do my part-time Diploma. I felt fireworks in my heart - this was a moment I was silently waiting for. Tears of joy were streaming down my cheeks. Never in my wildest dreams, did I imagine that I would be doing a Diploma. I always knew that I could study but never had the opportunity to do so.

Everything had changed when I was incarcerated, and I made the decision to turn my life around and start my life on a clean slate after my release from prison. I needed the courage and belief to build up my new life. To become a better version of myself. To achieve my goals and dreams.

I decided that I wanted to study in a field where I had passion and interest in so that I could do something I like for my career. Leaving my past job would be hard as I have been doing it for 10 years counting.

But isn't life about taking risks into the unknown?

I approached WE CARE and Mendaki for assistance in my application to further my studies and without hesitation they provided me all the things that were needed for me to follow up on my plans.

I am grateful for their kindness in helping me as they wrote letters of recommendation and they assisted me wholeheartedly. And so in a month or so, I found myself accepted into Republic Poly.

At this point in my journey, I feel really blessed for all the good things and people that I have around me. I feel highly motivated to do better and I feel that I have wings to soar to new heights. To have another shot at life. A new beginning. A chance to



right my wrongs. A new meaningful journey in life for me.

I am truly grateful for this opportunity and I will give it my all. I hope to do well and I want to inspire others and be of service to the recovering community.

**DREAMS DO HAPPEN IF YOU PUT YOUR MIND AND HEART INTO IT.**

**ALWAYS BELIEVE AND HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF.**

**Shabir**

I don't live that life any more.

**Alvin**

It's my story isn't it? I'm Puspa. 54 years old. I'm a recovering addict. I'm so glad now to be at WE CARE and I am happy with my life. No more suffering like before. Key words like 'Take one day at a time' and 'Keep coming back, it works' when I'm working on it. With all the support that is given to me, that's where I am now. I love playing music and I will never forget where I come from. It is so amazing that I have my longest recovery period here. I want people to know me by the name of Puspa. Thanks to everyone that welcomes me even though sometimes I have my ups and downs. No matter what happens to you in life, we have to move on. Thank you from a recovering addict. With lots of love and kisses.

**Puspa**

## Tips, Advice and more

### Staying Fit during Covid

1. Tabata workouts are a type of HIIT (high-intensity interval training) which consists of 8 different 30-second exercises, totalling up to 4 mins. The idea is to do as many rounds of 4 mins as you can, with as little rest time (maximum 1 min of rest) in between as possible. It is good to try out 1 round to get a feel of the intensity, then proceed to set goals on how many rounds you would like to do in each workout.

I would recommend starting with one round a day, and as you progress along the week, add 1 round per day, to a maximum of 8 rounds per workout (8 is actually very impressive - I am at 4 at the moment).

It is ok if you are unable to keep up with the pace of the video - you will, eventually, as you keep on practising. Follow the video, and switch exercises when the trainers do. The most important thing is to KEEP MOVING for the whole 4 mins.

Ultimately, do what is comfortable, even if it means spacing out the workouts across the whole day i.e 1 round every 2 hours. This 4 min workout gives a good range of motion and moves parts of your body that don't get much use on an average day at home. If nothing else, it serves as a way to keep you nimble.

In case the first gets boring, I have added another Tabata workout video from the same group (do check out their YouTube channel - lots of good routines). [QR codes are at the end of this article]  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=hauHNny-WQs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hauHNny-WQs)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4ziWoCuf5g](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4ziWoCuf5g)

2. For the gym rats, without need for much explanation, here are some bodyweight workouts for the back and shoulders (we all know quite a number of go-to exercises for other muscle groups, but back and shoulders require much more creativity to do without weights so this should be helpful).



The YouTuber has many calisthenic exercises of varying intensities worth checking out.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFY3p3eMPkk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KFY3p3eMPkk)  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aT-GUy8Iwg](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9aT-GUy8Iwg)

3. Lastly, a very comprehensive movement workout that helps with flexibility and joint strength. This video is 30 mins long - pace yourself and follow at a comfortable cadence. The idea is to KEEP MOVING for the duration of the video.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlnDB4fqYUE](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AlnDB4fqYUE)

#### Alvin S

##### QR Codes



Tabata



Back and shoulder



Movement





## Tips, Advice and more



There is plenty to do at home. Ask us.

I've been an avid follower of the Ten Percent Happier podcast for some years now and recently they have added a "daily sanity break" which you can access for free. I really like this one by addiction specialist Dr. Judson Brewer; it includes a mindfulness meditation on anxiety [www.tenpercent.com/tph-live/11-judson](http://www.tenpercent.com/tph-live/11-judson)

As part of my self care routine I have also started taking a free course online on Coursera. I really like the courses they offer on art and music:

[www.coursera.org/browse/arts-and-humanities/music-and-art](http://www.coursera.org/browse/arts-and-humanities/music-and-art)

**Sofia**

Tara Brach is a wonderful free resource for both inspirational talks and meditation. A well-known meditation teacher and writer, she shares a weekly guided meditation and talk that blends Western psychology with Eastern spiritual practices.

Check out her website at <https://www.tarabrach.com/> and her podcasts at <https://www.podcastrepublic.net/podcast/265264862>

Her guided meditation can be found at <https://www.tarabrach.com/meditation-touching-peace-2/>

**Natasha**

### Immunity Boosting Powder

I feel we all should have good immunity all the time. I share a small recipe that I have been using for my family. We have it every day and it has helped my family to build their immunity. All the ingredients in it, are easily available in Singapore.

This powder combines the power of healing spices to boost your immunity, reduce inflammation, manage diabetes, joint pains and cardiovascular issues; and it improves skin and hair health. All you need is half a teaspoon a day!

Ingredients :

- 7 tbsp. - Organic Turmeric powder (Haldi)
- 4 tbsp - Cumin seeds (Jeera)
- 4 tbsp - Coriander Seeds (Dhaniya)
- 7 tbsp- Fennel seeds (Saunf / Variyali)
- 2 tbsp- Dry Ginger Powder (Saunth)
- 2 tbsp - Whole black pepper (Kali Mirch)
- ½ tbsp - SriLankan Rolled Cinnamon powder (Dalchini)
- 3 tbsp - Cardamom (whole Elaichi)

Procedure :

1. Keep turmeric powder and dry ginger powder in a separate bowl( no roasting)
2. Lightly roast all the remaining ingredients on a slow flame till you get a nice aroma. (Avoid burning the spices.)
3. Once cooled, transfer them in a grinder and grind them to a powder.
4. Add turmeric and dry ginger powder to it and mix it with a dry spoon.
5. Store in a clean, airtight glass or steel jar.

Dosage:

1/2 tsp every day either with water or as a seasoning in food. It suits all adults and children

**Jyoti**

## Are you resilient?

For the last ten years, writer Emily Esfahani Smith has been interviewing people about their experience with stress. She has also researched extensively to find out why some of us are broken by crises but others come out stronger. In other words, why some of us are more resilient than others.

This is especially relevant now because the virus pandemic has disrupted life everywhere. We are all feeling anxious, fearful and hopeless. We worry about life and the future after the circuit breaker. Our mental health is affected negatively.

Most people you ask will feel that those who focus on finding happiness will cope better. Not true. What Ms Smith found is that those who are able to maintain hope and meaning in life, survive better. This attitude is called tragic optimism, a term coined by psychiatrist Viktor Frankl, and it is the ability to maintain hope and meaning, even though we know there is pain and suffering all around us, that makes us resilient.

More than helping us to cope, tragic optimism actually enable us to grow through adversity. As we try to make sense of what has happened, we become stronger and discover a newfound purpose. We are also able to have deeper relationships, and can appreciate life and the people around us better.

So in a crisis, the advice to find something that makes us happy does not really work. Yes, you can have durian or chocolate ice cream, and they will give you instant happiness. But only for a while.

What is more important is to find some meaning even when life is bleak. And in our community two things connect us to finding meaning: gratitude and service.

Being grateful and giving service do not make us happy right away, unlike durian or ice cream. However, fast forward weeks and months later, and you will find that gratitude and service can

make you feel enriched, purposeful and inspired. You will actually feel a part of something bigger.

To find meaning and hope now, writer Stephanie Marston advocates giving back to the community. Here in Singapore, there are always opportunities to help. Give your neighbour a hand, check in on a vulnerable friend, join a community group, or help collect clothes for migrant workers.

Focus also on the small things that give you pleasure, like cooking a meal, or spending time with your pet. Go for a walk and be in and with nature. And limit your time on social media and news — there

“One more, just one more.”



Not so resilient. Writer reacts badly after learning that cake and ice cream shops will be closed,

is just too much negative and fake news and it is stressful to read about unhappy events all the time.

And remember to be grateful we all still have each other.

### Leslie

What I enjoy about volunteering with WE CARE is how welcoming everybody is. That includes the office team and also all the clients that come through - everyone is wanting to engage and say hello. I love that! I think it's great that clients are able to walk through the office into the communal area, this shows to me how inter-connected and welcomed everyone is. It's like a big family.

### Brett

## 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 : 6547 5459  
Fax : 6547 5458  
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 core services are:

- Counselling for recovering addicts and their families
- Educational and therapy programmes
- A drop-in centre
- Recovery support groups
- Community outreach
- Preparing & helping recoverees find work

For more information on what we do, please go to:  
[www.wecare.org.sg](http://www.wecare.org.sg)



## Donate to WE CARE



Scan this QR code to donate with PayNow

**WE CARE** Community Services Ltd is a registered charity organisation. 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. Our current online campaign is on giving.sg:

[https://www.giving.sg/we-care-community-services-limited/recovering\\_persons\\_need\\_help](https://www.giving.sg/we-care-community-services-limited/recovering_persons_need_help)

You can also PayNow with the QR code on the left.



Scan this QR code to donate at giving.sg

