

A long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, a school health service was formed to look after the health and hygiene of Singaporean school children. But nothing much was said of mental health until the late 1960s. Singapore, at that time, was just finding its feet in creating a fairer, more inclusive social milieu that took care of the rights of children. Through fun, whimsical illustrations, this graphic novel charts the growth and development of child mental health services that began with the setting up of the Child Guidance Clinic in 1970.

How many psychiatrists does it take to raise a child? None – children are raised by parents. This book is also a parenting guide to looking after the mental health of every family member. Offering tips from understanding difficult emotions and developing respectful communication skills to strategies for calming stress responses, this book invites us to create a kinder, more compassionate world for children and ultimately, raise human beings who are well prepared for the journey of life.

visit our website at:
www.marshallcavendish.com

mc Marshall Cavendish
Editions

NYP NANYANG
THE INNOVATIVE POLYTECHNIC

Child Guidance Clinic



Marshall Cavendish
Editions
mc

THE STRESS WARS

DANIEL FUNG
SHIRLYN GOH
ONG SAY HOW

DANIEL FUNG, SHIRLYN GOH, ONG SAY HOW



THE STRESS WARS

HOW MANY PSYCHIATRISTS DOES IT TAKE TO RAISE A CHILD?

For review only

THE
STRESS
HOW MANY PSYCHIATRISTS DOES IT TAKE TO RAISE A CHILD?
WARS

DANIEL FUNG, SHIRLYN GOH, ONG SAY HOW

For review only

CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| Foreword by Minister of State Low Yen Ling | ix |
| Foreword by A/Prof Kenneth Mak | xi |
| Preface | xiii |
| Acknowledgements | xv |
| Prologue | xvii |
| | |
| Chapter 1: A New Hope | 1 |
| Chapter 2: A Clinic Awakens | 11 |
| Chapter 3: The Return of the Family | 23 |
| Chapter 4: The Rise of Child Psychiatry | 45 |
| Chapter 5: A Padawan Story | 63 |
| Chapter 6: Travel Through Time | 73 |
| Chapter 7: A School of Feelings | 83 |
| Chapter 8: The Last Player | 89 |
| Chapter 9: The Attack of the Stressors | 99 |
| Chapter 10: Battle for the Heart | 113 |
| | |
| About the Authors | 128 |

For review

FOREWORD

“With great power comes great responsibility.” This popular quote from the Spider-Man comic is a charge to those with extraordinary skills and expertise to make a positive difference to society.

In this beautifully drawn graphic novel, we see a team of “superheroes” answering this call. Many of these experts – from psychiatrists and clinical psychologists to occupational therapists and medical social workers – are using their knowledge and “powers” to care for children’s mental and emotional well-being.

This graphic novel traces the history and development of child mental health services and the Child Guidance Clinic in Singapore. The growth and progress of these services were made possible by the vision, hope and selfless sacrifices of those who believed in serving, caring and developing our children’s mental well-being.

Over the years, the loving care of these “superheroes” have uplifted thousands of children, parents and families. I would like to commend them for their perseverance, professionalism and immense contributions to shaping and improving the mental health of children in Singapore.

My congratulations to the team for putting this excellent graphic novel together. The journey of child psychiatry services is presented through interesting personal stories, peppered with useful mental health tips and brought alive by the vibrant illustrations of students from Nanyang Polytechnic School of Design.

I hope this book will spark conversations and greater understanding on the importance of mental health, and strengthen our whole-of-society commitment to build a more caring and inclusive Singapore.

Low Yen Ling
*Minister of State,
Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth & Ministry of Trade and Industry
Mayor of South West District*

For review

FOREWORD

It is a privilege to be provided the opportunity to write the foreword to this book.

Child Psychiatry celebrates its 50th anniversary this year in Singapore and this is an important milestone in our efforts to promote the mental health and well-being of children. Instead of a more conventional tome to showcase the historical milestones of this subspecialty of psychiatry, Daniel Fung has chosen a novel way of sharing that history, using graphic illustrations in a comic book. This will surely resonate with those who are young or young at heart.

This book does not describe history in a stodgy style. Within the pages of this graphic novel are intimate descriptions of the leading psychiatrists in this field within Singapore, the history of child psychiatry in Singapore and a parenting guide on best practices in raising children. Weaving through these elements is the narrative of a young doctor, growing up to become a psychiatrist and then choosing child psychiatry as his passion.

Youth mental health is an important part of the mental health of our nation. Reducing the risks and consequences of mental illness, as well as promoting resilience in our future generations is an important part of child psychiatry and it is no surprise to see this graphic novel aptly entitled *The Stress Wars*. I congratulate the authors of this collaborative effort to share an important part of medical history and educate the public on an important facet of Singaporean life.

May your mental health (aka the force) be strong in you!

A/Prof Kenneth Mak
Director of Medical Services
Ministry of Health, Singapore

For review only

PREFACE

The year 2020 marks the 50th year of child psychiatry in Singapore. It is also the year the World Congress of the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (IACAPAP) is held in Singapore. This is a graphic novel about the development of child mental health services that began with the setting up of the Child Guidance Clinic in 1970.

Children's health was of concern as early as 1921, when a school health service was formed to look after the health and hygiene of school children. While dental health services developed in the 1950s, nothing much was said of mental health until the late 1960s. Like many stigmatising situations, mental health was not seen as important until the concepts of discrimination, rights and inclusivity became more relevant in society.

In May 1970, the Presidential Council for Minority Rights was set up to look after the rights of racial, linguistic and religious minorities emanating from a commission helmed by then Chief Justice Wee Chong Jin. It set out to try and look after minorities and enshrine these rights into our constitution. This was consistent with the idea that children with mental illness should too have their right to good and proper treatment. Singapore, at that time, was just finding its feet in creating a fairer social milieu that took care of various groups whose rights until then were severely curtailed by the social mores of the day.

We wanted to share this history but we also wanted to celebrate the growth and development in a fun yet whimsical manner. We also hope that in understanding the development of mental health services for children and families, our gentle readers will also learn about how to look after their own mental health, and the mental health of their families. This is the result of that endeavour.

Daniel Fung
Chairman Medical Board, Institute of Mental Health
President, International Association for Child
and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions

For review only

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the students from Nanyang Polytechnic: James Chen (Student Leader), Adalia Lee, Lin Si Cheng, Liu Jia Hang, Jiao Mei Qing, Wang Zi Yun and Lee Zhi Lin as lead illustrators with Ahmad and Hilmi as supporting illustrators, led by Shirlyn Goh, their inimitable lecturer from School of Design.

Dr Cai Yiming for being an advisor to the project.

Dr Tor Phern Chern who helped with the collection of photos and did the original background research for this.

Ms Chan Lishan, Dr Dicle Buyuktasgin, Ms Isobel Marguerite Suson Ngo for helping to go through the drafts with their helpful suggestions.

Ms She-reen Wong who helped develop the storyline and her team from Marshall Cavendish for believing in this project.

For review only



For review

1964

Minister of Health, Yong Nyuk Lin, praised the school health doctor's team of 11 doctors at the Institute of Health (IOH), which saw 300 to 500 children a day. This covered more than 145,000 students over the year, largely on physical health conditions.



*Good work, guys.
Keep up the hard work!*

**But what of
mental health?**

The objectives of setting up the Child Guidance Clinic in 1968 were to provide services for children apart from adults. Policy makers believed that emotional issues for children would become more real in a modern, urbanised environment.

1968

“ I am not sure how to work with children. Maybe we should get some training? ”

Dr Ho Eng Siong,
Senior Registrar
Woodbridge Hospital

“ We need a clinic for children under stress. ”

Dr Yap Meow Foo,
Medical Superintendent,
Woodbridge Hospital



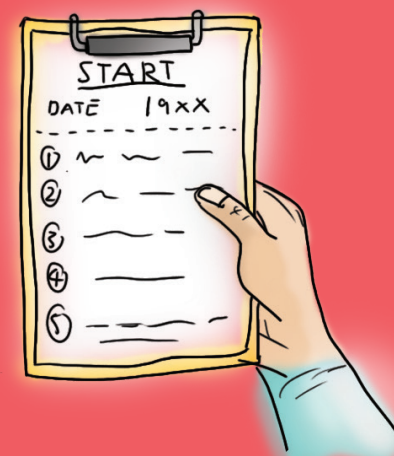
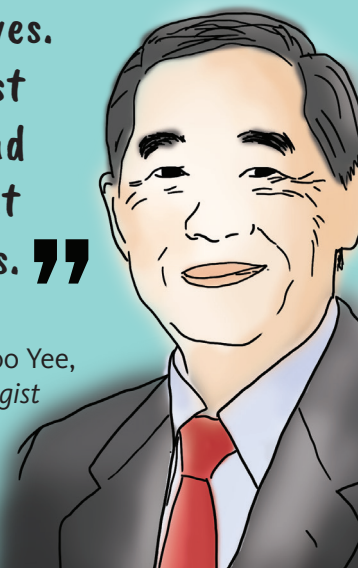
“ Yes, I feel like a child myself in these matters. ”

Mr Chin Poh Cheong,
Medical Social Worker



“ Let's not get ahead of ourselves. Let's just start and see what happens. ”

Mr Fred Long Foo Yee,
Clinical Psychologist

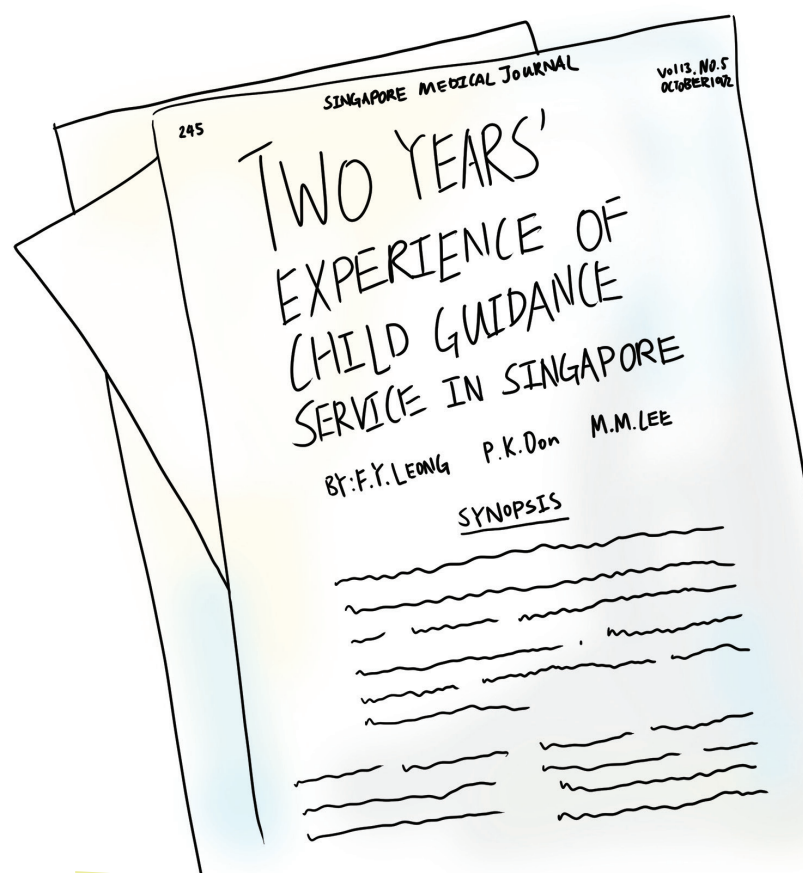


And so, the Child Guidance Clinic saw a handful of patients. In 1968, it was not a big start.

For review only

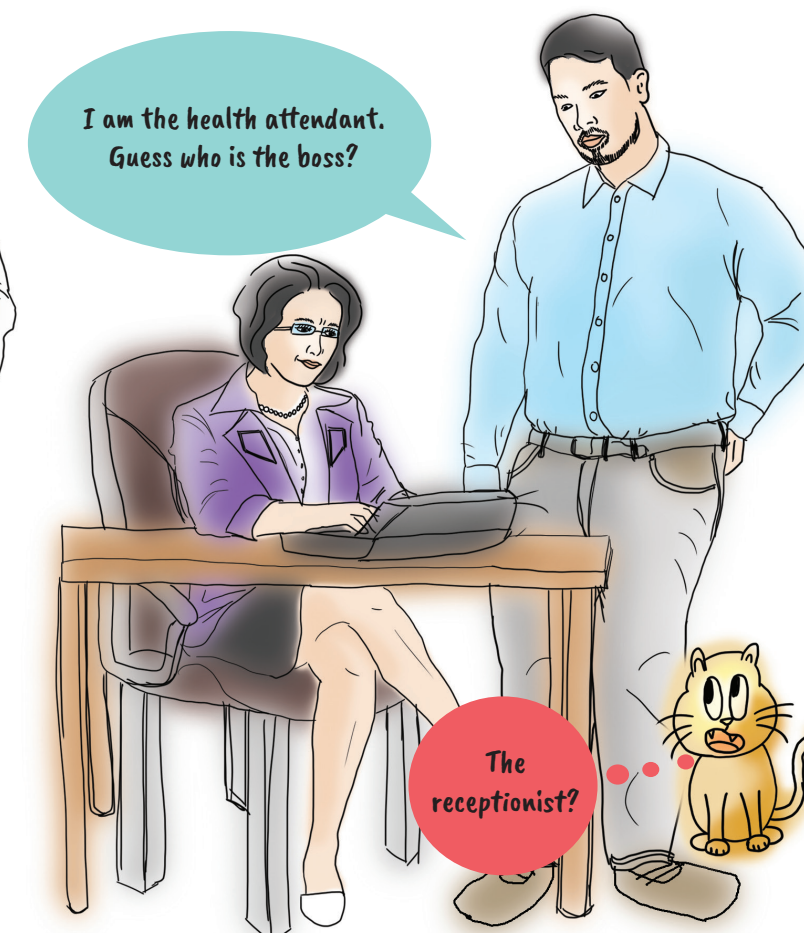
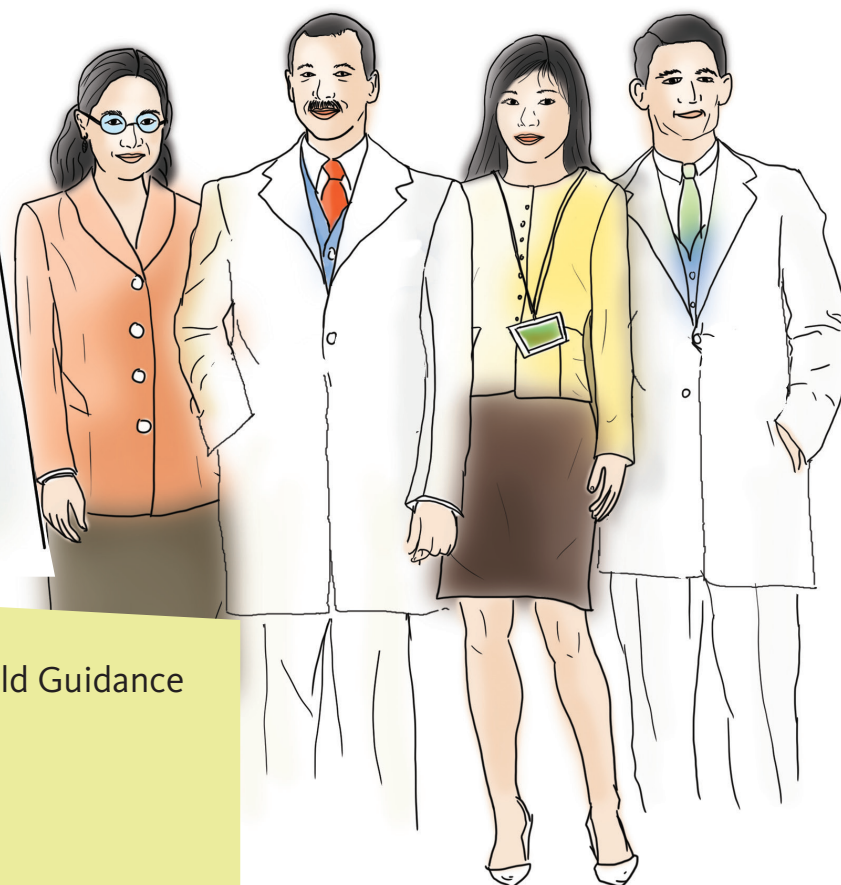
Some hints of what was happening between 1968 to 1970 were found in the Singapore Medical Journal.

As early as May 1968, a proposal was made to the Ministry of Health to establish a Child Guidance Service initially at the Midwife Quarters of the Queenstown Outpatient Dispensary. It was to be staffed by a team of five – a Senior Registrar, psychologist, part-time social worker, stenographer and health assistant – with a view towards a full complement of eleven (with an additional consultant, psychologist, three medical officers, receptionist and pharmacist).



The details of the early plans to establish a Child Guidance Service could not be found.

And so, it remained a secret until ...



BY APPOINTMENT CARD ONLY:



Clinic fees in the 1970s:
\$1 (subsidised)
\$35 (with referral)

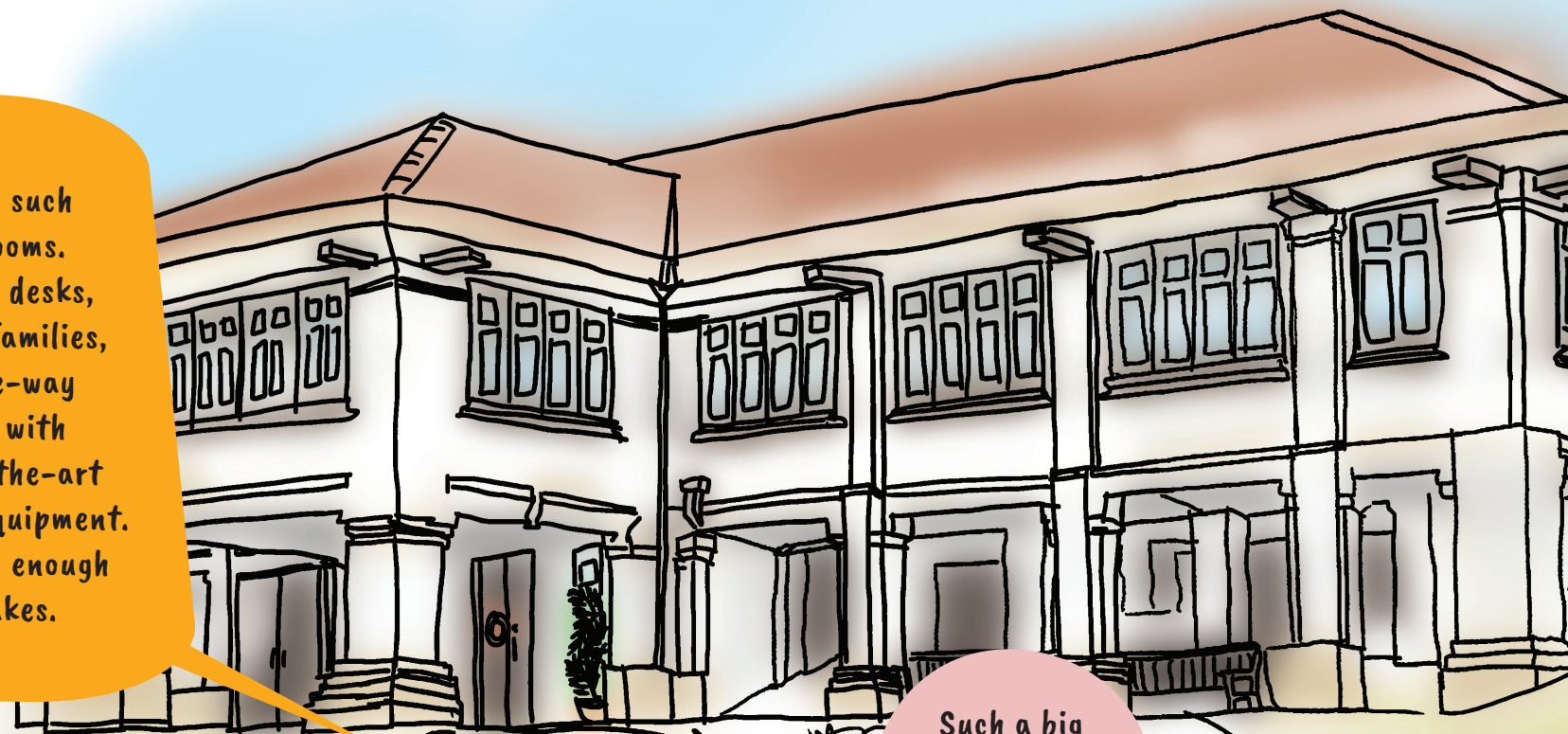
We have such large rooms. Space for desks, sofas for families, even one-way mirrors with state-of-the-art recording equipment. Even space enough for snakes.

Did I just see a rat?



MEN IN WHITE

The official date for the beginning of child psychiatry in Singapore can be identified as 7 April 1970, when the Ministry of Health (MOH) opened the Child Guidance Clinic (CGC) at the Outram Road General Hospital (now known as the Singapore General Hospital) in a bungalow originally occupied by the Medical Superintendent.



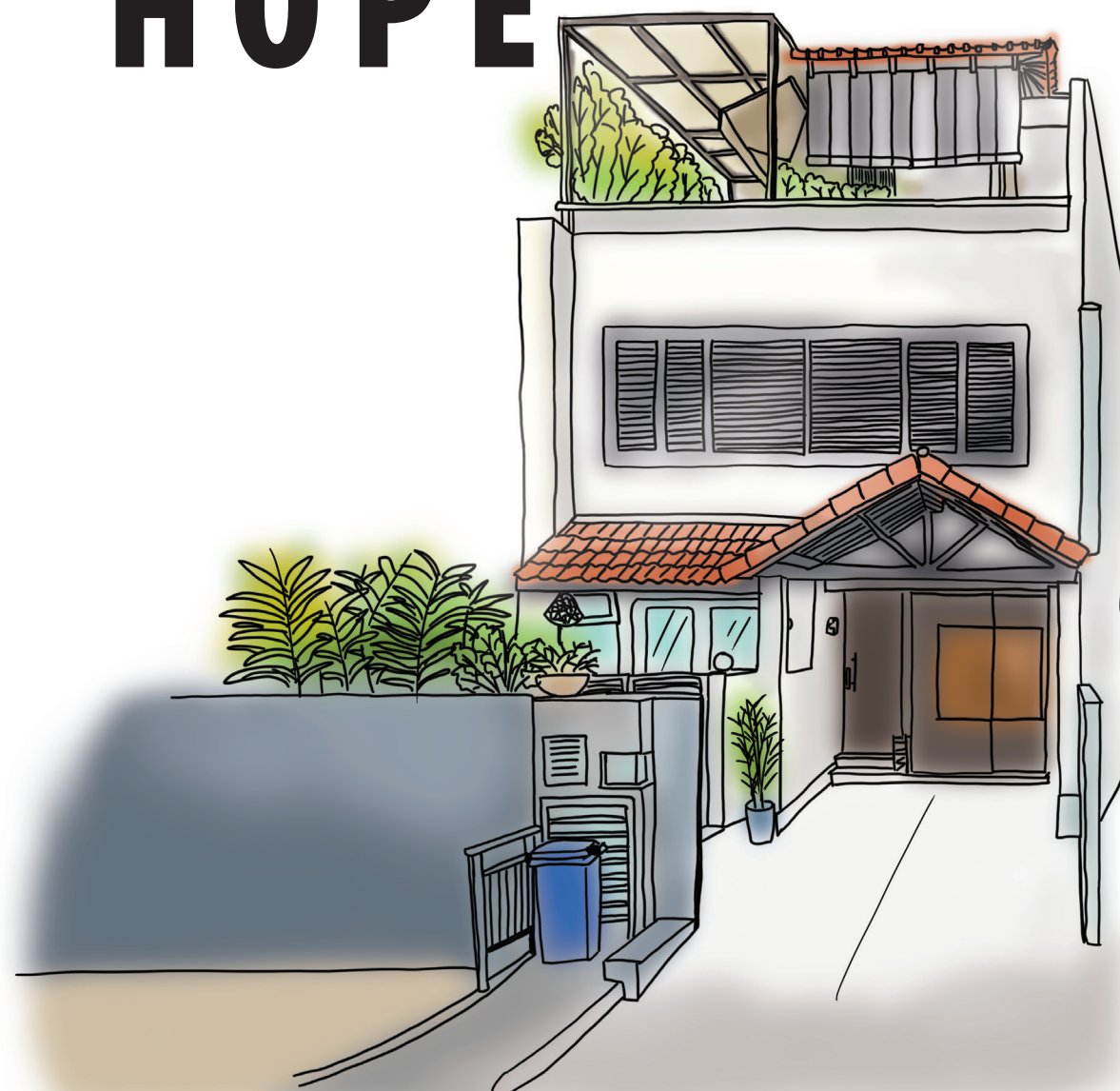
Such a big space for just the few of us.

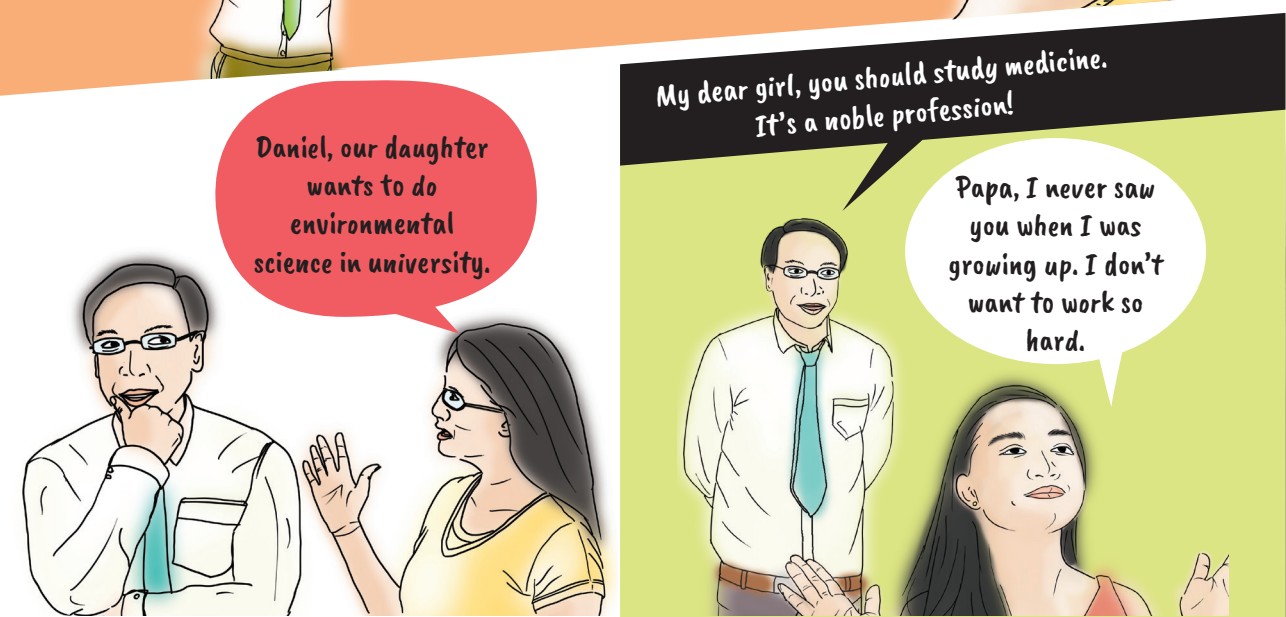
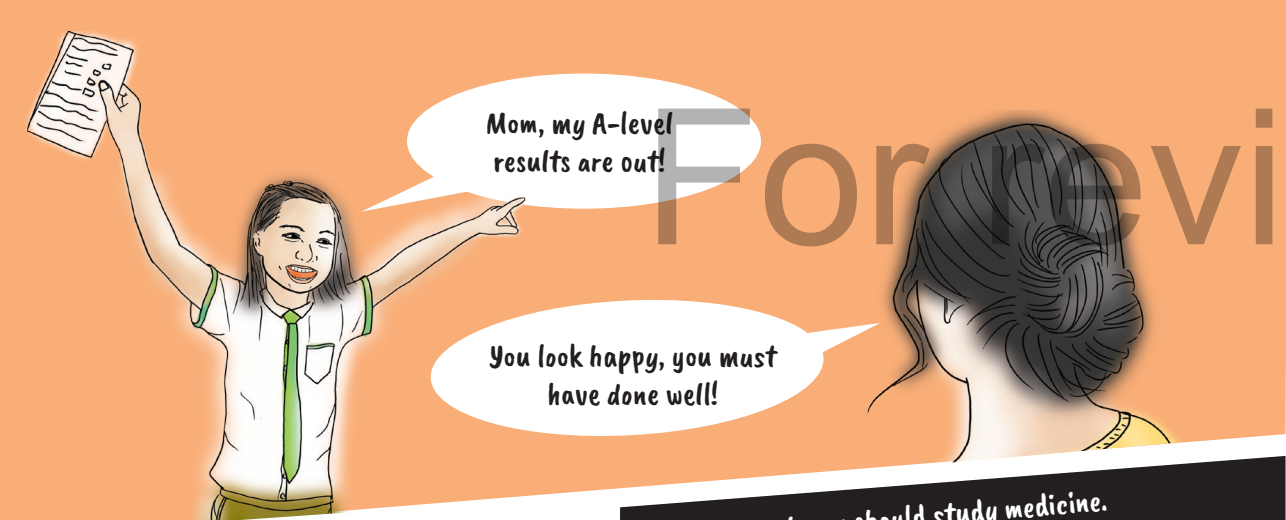
For review only



A NEW HOPE

Our story begins in a house with
a father and his daughter ...





Our story begins in a maternity ward ...

In 1966, a baby was born to a teacher and a bank officer at Kandang Kerbau Hospital. That year, KKH held the world record for number of births in a maternity hospital with 39,835 births, a record that it held for 10 years. More than 85% of births in Singapore took place in KKH and more than 100 babies were born every day.

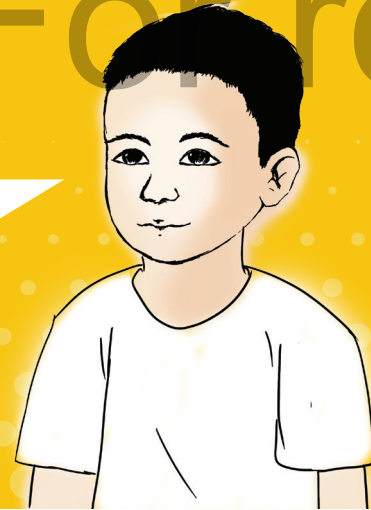


Amidst the hubbub of the maternity ward, that little baby was almost mistakenly taken by another mother. Apparently the latter had lost her child and went about the nursery looking for babies to suckle.

And so, during the psychedelia and stress of the 1960s, the baby, named Ah Seng, grew quickly despite Singapore's infant mortality rate recorded at 27 per 1,000 births then. Today, it is below 2 per 1,000 births.

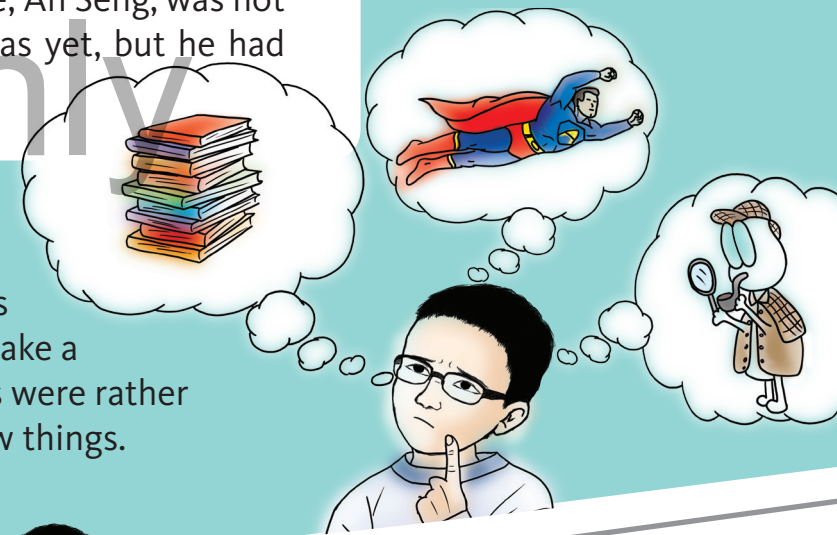
For review only

My family calls me Ah Seng. Most Chinese families call their children that, but my mother told me that names are important and my name meant holiness. I thought she wanted me to be a priest.



Our young apprentice, Ah Seng, was not aware of his destiny as yet, but he had many aspirations.

He read voraciously, and loved both books and comics. While this fuelled his desire to make a difference, his parents were rather concerned about a few things.



Finish up your food, Ah Seng. African children are starving.

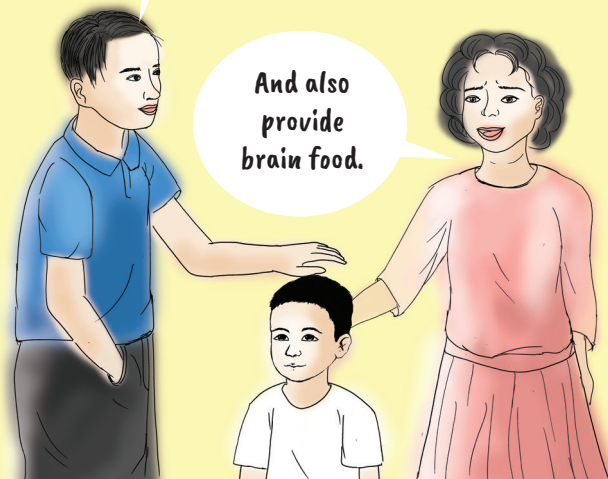
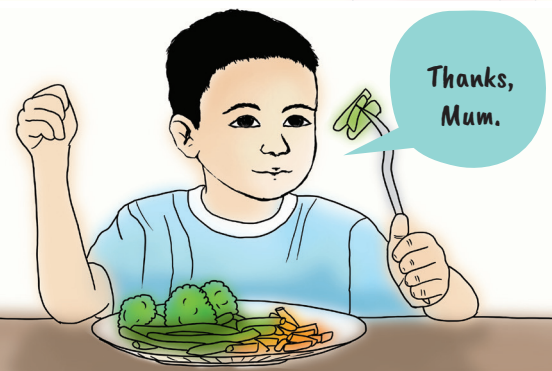


Holy smokes, he is growing fast.

Yes, I feed him good food.

And also provide brain food.

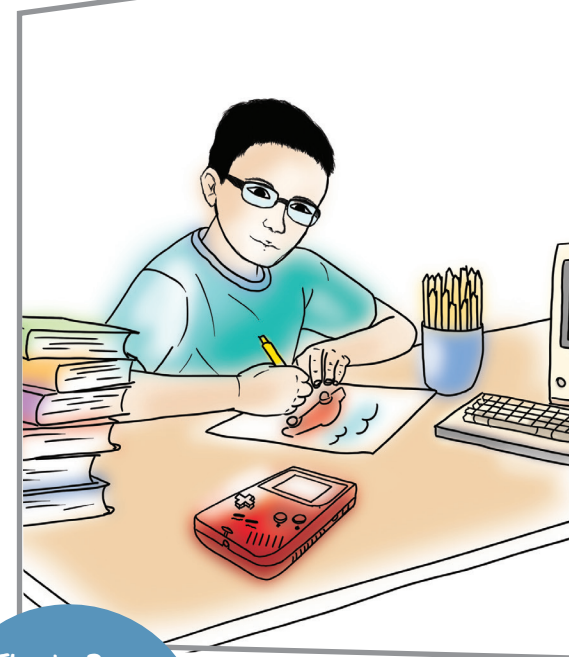
Thanks, Mum.



Ah Seng, go and make friends.

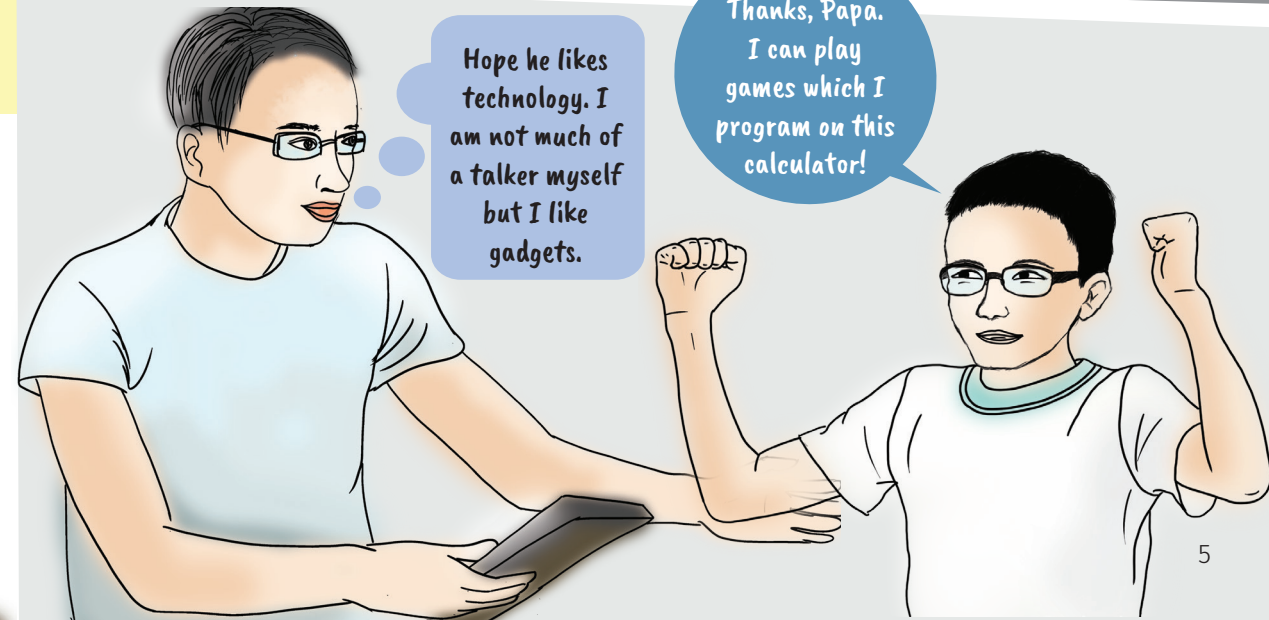
She is our neighbour ... and my girlfriend.

OK, no stress, not so fast.



Hope he likes technology. I am not much of a talker myself but I like gadgets.

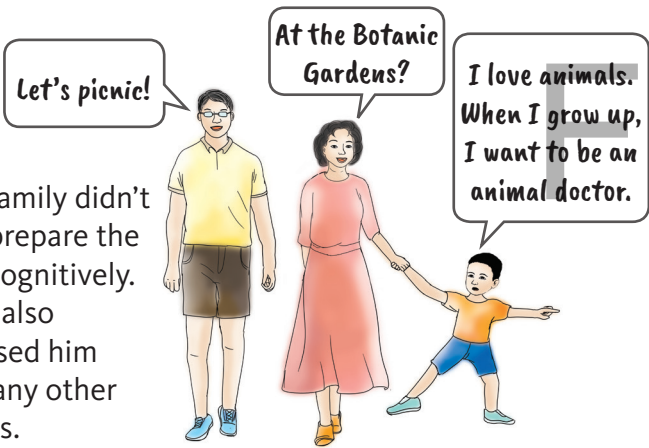
Thanks, Papa. I can play games which I program on this calculator!



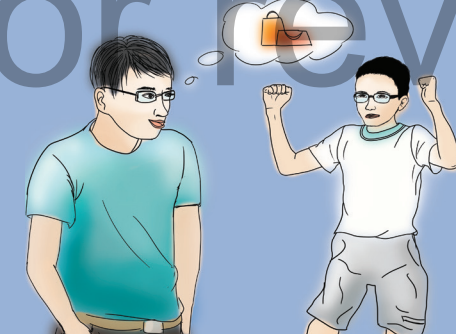
I love books.



The family didn't just prepare the boy cognitively. They also exposed him to many other things.



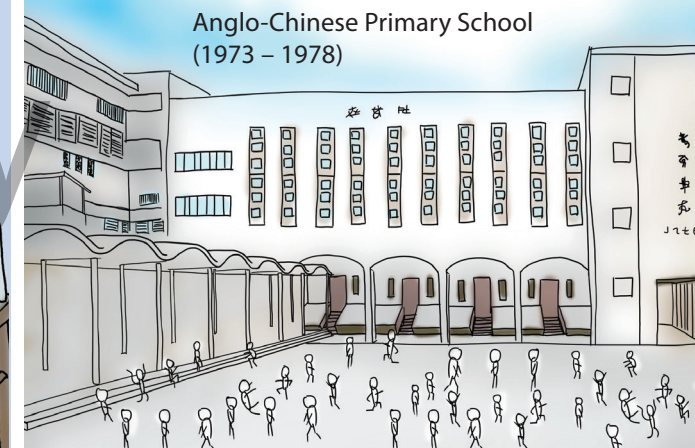
But like true blue Singaporeans, the family loved shopping.



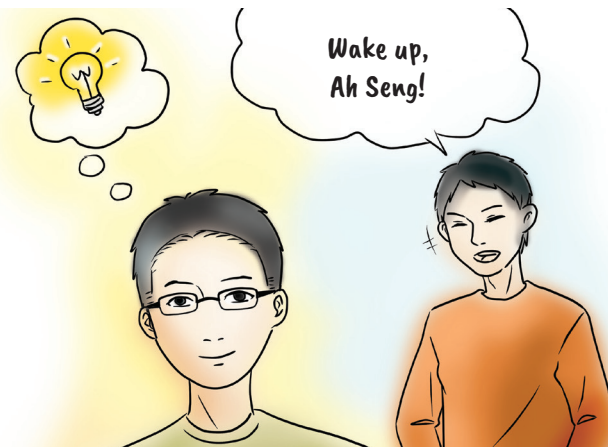
Starting school was a wake up call for our avid learner.



Anglo-Chinese Primary School (1973 – 1978)



One memorable incident in Ah Seng's life revolved around shopping. On 21 November 1972, two days after Ah Seng visited the 100-year-old department store, Robinsons, it caught fire and was razed to the ground. Nine people were killed in the blaze.



Anglo-Chinese School (1979 – 1982)



Ah Seng, eat your favourite turtle soup.



Ah Seng loved his comics and books, and had his eye on an encyclopaedia set that he kept asking his parents for.



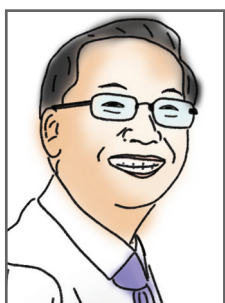
The dreamer loved to doodle and won prizes for his art.



After years of being told to wake up, Ah Seng awoke to his eventual passion ...

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

view only



Daniel Fung was born to Chinese-educated parents and was sent to an English school as his mother felt that the Chinese-educated at that time were disadvantaged in Singapore. Daniel completed his schooling in Anglo-Chinese School and went to Hwa Chong Junior College to try and rekindle his Chinese roots. He completed his medical studies in 1990 and decided on psychiatry with a strong desire to do child psychiatry because of his love of children. Daniel married his teenage sweetheart, Joyce, in 1992. Completing his postgraduate medical studies in 1996 and his advance training in 2000, Daniel won the Singapore Psychiatric Association book prize for being the best candidate in his cohort. Daniel's journey in child psychiatry is also part of the history of child psychiatry in this small island state. He is Chairman Medical Board at the Institute of Mental Health and President of the International Association for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Allied Professions (IACAPAP).



Ong Say How is a senior consultant psychiatrist and Chief of the Department of Developmental Psychiatry at the Institute of Mental Health. He obtained his Masters in Medicine (Psychiatry) in 1999 from the National University of Singapore. He has engaged extensively in outpatient services for children and adolescents with psychological problems and researched in mood and anxiety disorders, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. He has also supported the use of art and other creative-expressive therapies to help children and young teenagers who suffer from anxiety, depression and trauma. He is a frequent speaker in public forums and media interviews on child mental health issues. He is a faculty member of Singapore's three medical schools and presently helms the position of Psychiatry Lead in one of them. In 2014, he formed and became the inaugural chairperson of Singapore's first Section of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry under the auspices of the College of Psychiatrists, Academy of Medicine.

About the CGC

The Institute of Mental Health runs two Child Guidance Clinics (CGCs) located at Buangkok Green Medical Park and Health Promotion Board at Outram Road. Young patients (18 years old and below) who are facing emotional or behavioural problems may seek consultation at either location.

The CGCs provide the following specialty clinics:

Neurobehavioural Clinic (NBC) - Autism Services are provided for children and adolescents (between 6-18 years old) with autism. Cases may be referred from other hospitals, polyclinics, general practitioners, or schools or they may be self-referred.

Neurobehavioural Clinic (NBC) - ADHD Services offers specialised multi-disciplinary assessment and therapy for children and youth with ADHD and mental health co-morbidities. Through parent education and workshops, this team seeks to work collaboratively with parents and caregivers in supporting their children's needs.

The Mood & Anxiety Clinic (MAC) provides comprehensive assessment, treatment planning, and intervention for children with mood, anxiety, and other related emotional conditions that may require clinical attention.

Forensic Rehabilitation, Intervention, Evaluation & Network Development Services (FRIENDS) provides comprehensive and integrated multi-disciplinary assessment and intervention services targeted at the following groups facing mental health issues: young offenders, youth at risk of committing offences, victims of child abuse and children and parents involved in complex custody and access disputes.



Shirlyn Goh is a Senior Lecturer with Nanyang Polytechnic. She is living her aspiration to be an educator. With a Masters in Design from the University of New South Wales, she is a key lecturer in the poly's new Experiential Product and Interior Design diploma and a sought-after speaker for seminars and conferences – not only for her design experience, but also for her expertise in pedagogical development. Shirlyn has championed Industrial Design Cares (ID CARES), a programme which gives students a platform to use their design skills and make a difference in the community. For this book, she partnered IMH and mentored the design students who have illustrated this graphic novel.

The design students who worked on the illustrations report benefitting greatly from their involvement in this project, and share their reflections:

James (Student Leader): I would like to start off by thanking Dr Fung and Ms Goh for giving us the opportunity to be involved in this amazing project. It was an eye opener into the world of child psychiatry. Illustrating the characters made me realise I had potential not only as an industrial designer, but also in other areas in design.

Adalia: This project gave me an understanding of how IMH partners parents and children to strengthen their relationship. From my drawings, I hope readers will see the importance of how every family is different and unique, and that every child is special. Each child has the potential to grow only if we give them the support they need.

Jia Hang: This is a wonderful opportunity, drawing the main character of the book. Through this project, I have learned a lot more about child psychiatry and improved significantly in my illustration skills. I hope this book will help more parents better understand their children.

Si Cheng: Drawing comics is one of my hobbies. I never thought that I could apply this skill in a real-life project. The moment I heard there was an illustration project from IMH, I was really excited to join in. The stories create an unusual world that allows the reader to have a better understanding of child psychiatry in Singapore.

Mei Qing: It went from me just participating as an illustrator to becoming really involved in the meaning of this book. I sincerely hope that this book will help families, and improve relationships between parents and children. Hopefully the

illustrations help readers to better understand and get involved in the stories too. I also learned to appreciate graphic/comic books more as I now understand the level of professionalism needed to bring these books to fruition!

Zi Yun: To me, it was an excellent chance to explore a new field and apply my drawing skills at the same time. Now, a year has passed, and despite the effort and sweat put in, I still think it is one of the best decisions I have ever made to get involved. Dr Fung has created such an interesting book and it gives me so much understanding about child psychiatry. The details and knowledge are well described!

Zhi Lin: I have learned new things and picked up new skills. The nature of the project is quite different and it took me some time at the start to get used to drawing human characters rather than objects. I learned about working on illustrations, how a comic book is published and the nature and importance of child psychiatry.

About Nanyang Polytechnic & School of Design

Established as an institution of higher learning in 1992, Nanyang Polytechnic's (NYP) academic schools offer quality education and training through more than 35 full-time diploma courses and common entry programmes. NYP also has a full suite of continuing education and training (CET) options for lifelong learning, ranging from specialist and advanced diplomas, to SkillsFuture modules and courses. NYP's Asian Culinary Institute and the Singapore Institute of Retail Studies are CET institutes set up in partnership with SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) to champion and transform Singapore's F&B and retail sectors respectively. A third NYP CET institute - the National Centre of Excellence for Workplace Learning - also set up in collaboration with SSG, will spearhead the development of progressive workplace learning strategies and programmes for companies here.

The NYP School of Design (SDN) focuses on building a strong design foundation for students and inspiring them to make the world a better place for everyone through excellence in design. A studio-based approach to learning and our project-based curriculum means students work on actual projects, pitch their ideas to industry experts and see their designs come to life.