

learn



Parents making time on a weekend to learn from Mr Sophian Kayat the art of communicating with children.

their social and emotional intelligence.

Mental well-being is linked to social well-being. It is important for a child to develop his own identity and form healthy relationships with his peers and the adults around him. It also helps a child develop resilience to life's stressors and challenges, making it an important aspect of a child's holistic development.

RAISING RESILIENT CHILDREN

Mr Sophian Kayat, 43, is one of seven facilitators who conduct these workshops at pre-schools across Singapore. In addition to sharing tips on mental well-being, he brings his own experience as a social worker of 24 years to each session. "As a parent, we all want our children to grow up confident, secure and have a successful future. So we need to equip them with the appropriate tools to handle the many challenges they will face along the way. We need to start preparing for them a shield that will help them cope with the stresses of life," says Mr Sophian, who holds a doctorate in Psychotherapy.

Young children are easily stressed when faced with new people, environment or routines. They don't feel safe when separated from their parents or familiar caregivers. They

may feel anxious if they have difficulties forming friendships, have disagreements with siblings, or need to meet their parents' expectations, among other things. Mr Sophian hopes that parents who attend the workshops will learn to better identify their children's emotional states and needs and spend quality time with them. This will help parents better understand the motivations behind their children's behaviours and the views they hold. He recommends using the 3Cs of parenting skills — Care, Communication and Coach to boost their children's mental well-being.

After attending the workshop at Cherie Hearts Justkidz, Ms Low realised that she was 'guilty' of many of the 'don'ts' that Mr Sophian highlighted. "I'm usually tired by the time I come home from work and just want to rest. Often, I have no energy to communicate properly with my daughter, so I tend to get short with her," she says. Ms Low is now eager to put the strategies she has learnt to good use. "I will make a conscious effort to manage my own emotions and talk to my daughter more often. More importantly, I will stop, slow down and think about what is going on in my daughter's mind." ♥

Parents who are interested in 'Colours of the Mind' can notify their children's pre-schools. The pre-schools will contact HPB to request for the workshop.

THE 3Cs OF PARENTING SKILLS



Use these skills to develop the three domains in your child:

CARE

Be a family that gets along, and set aside quality time with your child. Build your family relationships on mutual trust and respect, and don't be afraid to apologise to each other if necessary.

COMMUNICATION

Focus and reflect on what your child says; express love and affection often; and recognise and praise his strengths.

COACH

Support and guide your child through life's challenges; look out for opportunities to help him build life skills; and, most importantly, be a role model.

For more information, you can refer to the online resource book "Healthy Start For Your Growing Kid" produced by HPB at www.hpb.gov.sg/Healthy-Start-For-Your-Growing-Kid



Getting an EXPERT Opinion

A BEAUTIFUL MIND

HPB IDENTIFIES THREE DOMAINS OF MENTAL WELL-BEING WHICH ARE IMPORTANT

- SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE**
"I know and can manage my feelings."
- SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE**
"I get along with people."
- POSITIVE FUNCTIONING**
"I can solve problems and I value myself."

Parents pick up skills to effectively communicate with their children to enhance their socio-emotional development at HPB's 'Colours of the Mind' workshop.

Ms Low Beng See and her husband, both from a small family, have a four-year-old girl, who is the only grandchild to both sets of grandparents. So when it comes to learning more about raising a child, Ms Low has to depend on herself, and do it by trial and error. "There aren't many people [in the family] I can turn to for advice," says Ms Low, a medical technologist.

She is not alone in this. Branch Director of Cherie Hearts Justkidz Ms Jaclyn Teo says that many parents of the children attending her centre are young parents. They tend to get their parenting advice from different sources — off the Internet, or from friends and colleagues who are also parents. "Sometimes, parents find it hard to discern whether the methods they use to manage their children's behaviour are appropriate," says Ms Teo. She arranged for a 'Colours of the Mind' workshop by the Health Promotion Board (HPB) to be conducted at her centre on 27 February 2016. "I wanted a platform that can help parents reflect on their actions and at the same time glean useful and valuable advice from an expert," says Ms Teo, 46.

'Colours of the Mind' was rolled out in 2012. The one-hour workshop is designed to equip parents with techniques on how to enhance their children's mental well-being — that is, by learning to communicate more effectively with their children and build

PHOTO BY TAN KAY HIAN

VALUE-ADD READS

Two books that will help your child learn about values and what it takes to build good character.

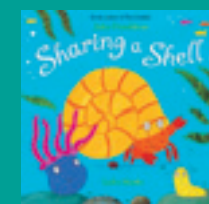


CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT: PARENTS' TOOLKIT

By Touch Community Services Singapore

This easy-to-follow guide can help you teach your child positive values such as honesty and gratefulness. It is supported by the Ministry of Social and Family Development. Activities are designed for primary school students but can be adapted for children as young as four.

Contributed by Masturah Abdul Halim, Associate Librarian, National Library Board



SHARING A SHELL

By Julia Donaldson

Let your child learn the benefits of sharing through this tale of sea, shells and friendship. When a little hermit crab finds a shiny new shell, he doesn't want to share! That night, a terrible storm makes him realise just how much he needs the help of others. The story is written in verse so you can add a familiar tune to sing it to your child.

Contributed by Norlizah Mohd Juffri, Librarian, National Library Board

