

YEO BOON KHIM MIND SCIENCE CENTRE

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What are the characteristic of emerging adults?

Key aspects of emerging adulthood:



Instability

Frequent changes in residence, relationships, and jobs are common.

Self-Focus

Emerging adults often have fewer obligations to others and more autonomy to make decisions about their own lives.



Possibilities / Optimism

There is often a sense of many possibilities in life, with high hopes and optimism about the future.

Feeling

In-Between

Individuals in this phase often feel they are no longer adolescents but not yet fully adults.

How is their mental health?

A preliminary survey from the National University of Singapore's Youth and Emerging Adults (YEA) study is shedding light on some worrying mental health trends among emerging adults aged 18 to 30. It turns out that those in their late 20s are feeling the pinch the most, with

YOUTH AND EMERGING ADULTS:

Navigating Mental Health Challenges



Emerging adulthood, refers to a distinctive phase of life that typically spans from the late teens to the late twenties, roughly ages 18 to 29, in the lives of people. During this time, young people experience significant life transitions, identity exploration, and societal pressures. Unlike earlier generations, many today delay commitments like marriage and parenthood to focus on personal growth and education.

This feature covers research findings shared during the round table discussion on Youth and Emerging Adults: Navigating Mental Health Challenges on 11 October 2024.

higher levels of anxiety and depression.

A big part of the stress comes from the pressure to do well academically and land a good job.

Is this unique to Singapore?

Across the globe, youth are dealing with a drop in mental well-being, driven by a complex mix of factors. Social media and internet use play significant roles. Long hours online have been shown to increase the risk of mood disorders and



anxiety due to constant peer comparisons. While these platforms foster connections, they also open the door to cyberbullying and pressures around body image. Additionally, family relationships can serve as another source of stress for young people.

How do youth manage mental health issues?

Young people do not always reach out for help when dealing with mental health challenges. Many have turned to gaming and smartphone as a means to cope with loneliness, stress, and anxiety. Unfortunately, this behaviour can trap them in negative cycles, increasing their reliance on mobile devices. However, researchers view digital platforms as an opportunity to offer support and therapeutic tools in environments young people already enjoy.

Expert Voices

Speaking Up for Mental Illness



"Just like any other organ, the brain can develop difficulties and malfunction, often in response to adverse environmental experiences. This can result in mental illness, which carries a significant mortality risk."

— Professor Jeremy Holmes



"Stigma isolates individuals, preventing them from seeking help. It impacts access to care, quality of treatment, and recovery outcomes. Addressing stigma is as crucial as treating the condition itself."

— Adjunct A/Professor Iris Rawtaer



"We need to focus on the person instead of his condition. The condition does not define him."

— Adjunct A/Professor Lee Cheng



"Empathy is the cornerstone of kindness, and in speaking up for mental health, we advocate not just for understanding, but for a world where everyone's struggle is met with compassion and support."

— Dr William Wan



This excerpt is from the 10th Tow Tiang Seng Distinguished Lecture Series. Scan to watch the full recording on MSC's YouTube channel.

1 I'MPERFECT musical raised over \$350,000

On the 25th of August 2024, the Esplanade was alive with the *I'MPERFECT* musical drama, organised by the Mind Science Centre (MSC) and Blue Empire Entertainment.

Over 1,400 attendees joined the event, which was honoured by Guest-of-Honour, Minister for Health, Mr. Ong Ye Kung. The musical explored youth mental health, highlighting the importance of community, familial, and peer support.

The production, which followed three teenagers, tackled on issues such as self-acceptance and the pressures faced by today's youth. The proceeds from the event will support several key initiatives



at MSC, including fostering resilience in early childhood and youth, enhancing educational capacity, promoting intergenerational care and healthy ageing, and sustaining centre facilities like the Mind Art Experiential Lab (MAELab) and MindGym.

This evening was made possible by the dedication and hard work of the cast, crew, production, creative team, and producer, Mary Anne Tan alongside invaluable support from champions of MSC's causes and generous donors. Thanks to ticket sales and contributions, MSC raised over \$350,000 from this one-night performance!



2 PARENTAL INDIFFERENCE AND NEGLECT NEGATIVELY AFFECT QUALITY OF LIFE IN ADOLESCENTS

Parental indifference and neglect is a form of parental rejection that is less overt than forms such as hostility and aggression, but still has negative effects on a growing child's quality of life. One component of quality of life is the development a healthy sense of self. Findings from the NUS Youth Epidemiology and Resilience (YEAR) 1.0 study reveal that parental indifference and neglect harms adolescents' (10 to 18 years) sense of self and identity, thus negatively impacting their quality of life. It was also found that the adolescents who are resilient by thinking positively about themselves, being optimistic, and having social support, can sometimes be slightly less affected by parental indifference and neglect. However, resilience does not protect the child completely – their quality of life and sense of self still relies heavily on parental involvement and warmth.

RESILIENCE IN AGEING



SOARS provides a well-rounded view of how older adults cope with challenges, highlighting their strengths and identifying areas where they might need extra support. This makes it a useful resource for researchers, caregivers, and community organisations aiming to enhance the quality of life for seniors.

As our society ages, understanding what helps seniors thrive is increasingly important. The Singapore Older Adults Resilience Scale (SOARS), led by Principal Investigator A/Prof Ng Tze Pin, is a new tool designed specifically for the elderly population in Singapore. This practical scale assesses various aspects of resilience, such as emotional well-being and social support, while considering the unique cultural context of our local community.



**SCAN THIS QR CODE TO
READ MORE ONLINE ABOUT
ALL THE STORIES!**



4

UNDERWATER NATURE: A BOOST FOR KIDS' WELLBEING

A brief trip to an aquarium not only sparks a child's imagination, but also offers a soothing escape that enhances their emotional and mental wellbeing. Our study at S.E.A. Aquarium, Singapore, reveals that interacting with marine life, along with the vibrant colours and gentle movements of underwater species, can have profoundly calming effects on children. This immersive experience elevates their mood, boosts alertness, and even lowers heart rates, fostering a deep sense of tranquillity. Similar to the benefits of spending time in natural landscapes, underwater environments provide unique therapeutic advantages, allowing children to connect with the serene beauty of marine life while promoting relaxation and joy.



Our Mission

With our key focus in Research, Education and Upstream Intervention Services, we strive to make a difference in the mental health scene across the age continuum. We are the first mental wellness centre in the world focusing on the Asian culture, lifestyle, phenotype and issues, so as to develop innovative holistic solutions that are uniquely Asia. Our ongoing research seeks to discover the potential benefits of engaging in *Mindfulness, Art Reminiscence, TaiChi, Horticulture, Rainforest Therapy, Choral Singing and Chinese Ink Painting*. **Support our meaningful cause by funding our research work!**

Language Changes as Early Warning for Alzheimer's

5 The way older adults express themselves might hold clues about their memory health! A recent study discovered that seniors with amnesic mild cognitive impairment (MCI) often use fewer nouns and prefer abstract terms in their speech. This reversal of the concreteness effect can be a sign of cognitive decline, appearing even before dementia symptoms show up. This finding underscores the importance of paying attention to language as a way to catch potential issues early. So, next time you engage in conversation with an elder family member, listen closely—those subtle shifts in words could signal important changes!

Health tips from experts:

- 7**
- According to Distinguished Professor Barry Halliwell, **spicing up your dishes with mushrooms rich in ergothioneine, a potent antioxidant, significantly shield your brain against age-related diseases and cognitive decline.**
 - Fats are essential for membrane function, organ protection, and hormone production, but it's important to choose the right kinds of fats and consume them in moderation to maintain optimal health. A/Prof Mary Chong advises selecting oils high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, such as sunflower, canola, and olive oil.



6

AGE WELL EVERYDAY CLUB TAKES OFF IN Clementi Meadows

The "Age Well Everyday (AWE) Programme" has been reintroduced as the "Age Well Everyday Club". The first club launches at Clementi Meadows, supported by Grassroots Adviser Ms Sim Ann. She welcomed the Mind Science Centre as an anchor programme provider in the new community hall, promoting active ageing.

These health tips were shared during MSC's Greater Good Series. This event was made possible by the generous donation of Mr. Tan Kwang Hwee, Managing Director of Newsman Realty.

THE NEXT CHAPTER:



What's Age Well Everyday Programme?

It is an initiative developed by Mind Science Centre designed to empower seniors to age well and maintain their cognitive health.

The programme combines evidence-based cognitive training with mindfulness and social engagement activities, creating a holistic approach to healthy ageing.



What's new?

The new AWE Club builds on the work of its pioneers. It offers updated cognitive and physical activities, based on new research.



FIRST AID FOR THE MIND

Reluctance to seek help can be a hallmark of a stoic culture like Singapore's. The downside? Older adults often silently battle feelings of depression and anxiety, leading to isolation. A recent study explored how trained senior volunteers can provide Psychological First Aid to their peers. The training, conducted by A/Prof Shefaly Shorey, not only offers support but also fosters meaningful connections among participants. Over six months, the study found a positive shift in mental health scores. Participants shared that having someone to talk to made a real difference, highlighting the importance of connecting with others who understand their challenges. Now, Psychological First Aid training is being offered to volunteers in the Age Well Everyday Club.



AWE IN YOUR AREA

Staying active is especially beneficial those heading into their silver years, as it enhances mobility, lifts mood, sharpens cognitive function, and helps prevent chronic conditions. Plus, it's a fantastic way to socialise and connect with others in the community.

Head to the nearest AWE in your area and join in on the exercise. AWE trainers will guide you through fun activities, workshops, and exercises that everyone can enjoy.



What can participants expect?

- Mindful awareness practice
- Physical exercise sessions
- Health education programs
- External courses, such as terrarium-making classes and Psychological First Aid
- Wide range of resources, including Dementia Asia webinars
- MindGym training programs
- Curated visits to MAELab

Follow @agewelleveryday on Facebook and Instagram for updates and useful tips!

"The ability to give is a blessing." — The late Mr Wee Sin Tho, The Founding Chairman of Yeo Boon Khim Mind Science Centre

As an organisation dedicated to building mental resilience across the demographic profiles in the community, we have invested in continuous research and rolled out evidence-based intervention and prevention programmes. These efforts have touched the lives of more than 14,000 seniors, healthcare workers and youths. As we are fully dependent on philanthropic support and grants, we sincerely appeal for your generous support of a memorial donation, which will go a long way in enabling MSC to persevere in our mission.

PHILANTHROPIC HIGHLIGHTS

Honouring Our Supporters & Inviting You to Share the joy

Philanthropy is important for education, research, launching early intervention programs, and addressing mental health needs in Singapore. An increasing number of individuals and organisations are stepping up to contribute, understanding that mental health is a collective responsibility, not just an individual concern.



DR DELLA SUANTIO LEE

Chairman of D. S. Lee Foundation and donor of Della Suantio Lee Professorship in Mental Health and Digital Science



PROFESSOR CHOO CHIAU BENG

Donor to the Choo-Lim Scholarship for Master of Clinical Mental Health and Psychotherapy



MR HSIEH FU HUA

Founder of BinjaiTree and donor of Scholarship for Master of Clinical Mental Health and Psychotherapy

"The \$3 million endowment donation the D. S. Lee Foundation has made to the Yeo Boon Khim Mind Science Centre is more than just a financial contribution—it is a commitment to the future of mental health research and education. I believe that by investing in the mind, we are investing in the well-being of countless individuals and communities. This gift is a testament to our deep respect for the work being done by Mind Science Centre, and our hope that it will fuel groundbreaking discoveries and support those in need."

"I am optimistic that with the support from the Singapore community, Yeo Boon Khim Mind Science Centre will continue to push the frontier in mental health resilience and play a crucial role in developing programmes that address the national mental health needs."

This is why I support Yeo Boon Khim Mind Science Centre in providing a scholarship. I hope to provide opportunities for dedicated individuals to further their education and contribute meaningfully to the field. By nurturing individuals who are passionate in improving the quality of life, I believe we can collectively make a lasting, positive impact on society's mental health landscape."

"From my personal experience, I've seen how crucial skilled support is during mental health challenges, both for myself and my family. This extends to the workplace, where providing access to counselling and therapy is essential to staff wellbeing. My hope is that mental health services will be viewed as an integral part of healthcare, with stigma removed and help readily available. By supporting students through scholarships, we encourage more to enter this vital field, transforming how mental health is treated and understood."

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to donors who choose to remain anonymous. Please visit for.sg/msc-donorwall to view the complete list of donor acknowledgments.

Spread joy this season give a that matters

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<https://for.sg/donate-nus-msc>



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Singapore tax residents are eligible for a tax deduction that is 2.5 times the gift value for gifts made in 2024. Please make your gift on or before 31 December, 2024, to ensure that eligible tax deductions are recognised for the 2024 tax year. For more information about donations, please contact Wileen at wileen@nus.edu.sg.

DON'T MISS!

Living with Dementia Webinar Series:

GOOD NEWS OF AGEING

SPEAKERS:

A/Prof Goh Lee Gan, Dr Rath Mahendran, Mrs Wee Geok Hua, Mdm Asiah Binte Ahmad and A/Prof Shefaly Shorey

Dementia can be prevented with non-drug interventions. Pioneering research has found that activities like tai chi, music reminiscence, and mindfulness show a significant reduction in dementia and depression rates. Watch the recording to hear our experts discuss the translational relevance of this groundbreaking research.

[Watch the webinar](#)



EXPERIENCE

NATURE'S EMBRACE
A GIFT TO THE MIND



Fridays are open for walk-ins, but appointments are needed for other days.

Walk-in on Friday only: 10 am - 5 pm (Last Entry 4 pm)

Tue - Thurs, and Sat: Visits are by appointment only*

Mon, Sun and PH: Closed

*Please book your appointment 2 working days in advance to visit the exhibition

D.S. Lee Foundation MAELab
Alexandra Hospital, 378 Alexandra Road, Blk 29 Level 2, Singapore 159964

[Scan to learn more](#)

