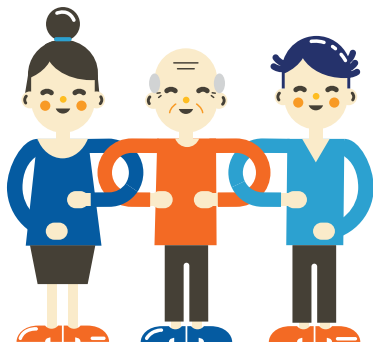


# MOVING TOWARDS A SENIOR- FRIENDLY SINGAPORE

By Agency for Integrated Care

A TODAY article in 2015 titled “Singapore feeling impact of rapidly ageing population” published that since 1965, Singapore’s population has grown from 1.9 million to 5.5 million in 2015. However, the number of citizens aged 65 and above has doubled from 220,000 in 2000 to 440,000 today, and is expected to increase to 900,000 by 2030. With one of the fastest ageing populations in the world, Singapore needs to prepare ourselves to better support the seniors. General Practitioners (GPs) like you can play a part to support ageing in place, and help seniors to live well.



## Doing more as a GP - Identify Needs and Service linkage

While attending to your patients’ physical health needs, you may also discover their mental and social care needs. Their caregivers may require support too or they being caregivers themselves may need other forms of help. You can support them by sharing the resources<sup>1</sup> available.



### Support Groups

An example is the Alzheimer’s Disease Association (ADA)’s caregivers support groups, that provide caregivers a platform to share thoughts, and to learn more about practical tips for dementia from specialists in English, Mandarin or Malay.



### Counselling

Provides either helpline counselling or face-to-face counselling services for caregivers to provide guidance on caregiving issues.

Organisations that offers these services include Samaritans of Singapore (SOS) and SAGE Counselling Centre.



### Training Courses

Programmes conducted by caregiver training providers to equip the caregiver with the right caregiving skills and knowledge.



### Helplines

For caregivers who need help or information in caring for seniors.

Singapore Silver Line: 1800-650-6060



### Caregiver Respite Care

Offers short breaks to caregivers to relieve stress from caregiving.



### Day Care Centres

Extends care for seniors during working hours, and helps provide relief for caregivers.



### Financial Schemes

Caregivers Training Grant (CTG) that provides caregivers with an annual grant of \$200 to attend approved training programmes.

<sup>1</sup> More useful resources in caregiving can be found on the Singapore Silver Pages ([www.silverpages.sg](http://www.silverpages.sg)), a one-stop resource portal for seniors and caregivers.



## Dementia-Friendly Community

To enable persons with dementia and their caregivers to continue living well in the community, Singapore has introduced the Dementia-Friendly Community (DFC) initiative. DFCs are communities where people like residents, businesses and services, and the community at large are aware of dementia and understand how to better support seniors with dementia and their caregivers. It is a place where the seniors feel respected, valued, and where help is within easy reach so that they can continue to lead independent and meaningful lives.

Countries like Australia, Japan and Taiwan have already started on the DFC journey to change mindset and better support persons with dementia in the community. Drawing on the lessons from these countries, Singapore is now adapting the DFC initiative to meet the needs of our ageing population.

To date, six DFCs have been established in Singapore in areas like Hong Kah North, Macpherson and Yishun with more to come. Over 23,000 individuals have also been engaged to raise their awareness about dementia and how they can communicate with persons with dementia in the community. Besides awareness, Go-To Points are set up in the community to provide resources and information on dementia and also serve as safe return points for those who may not be able to find their way home. For instance, residents can bring persons with dementia who may be lost to Go-To Points, where general assistance will be provided. This includes calming the person down and assist in identifying and contacting the person's next-of-kin/ family member. The staff at the Go-To Points will also link those who need help to relevant dementia-related support and services.

You can play a part by spreading awareness about dementia and know how to engage and communicate with seniors. If you come upon anyone who may have lost their way, you can help them find their way home with the Dementia Friends mobile application. Through this application, you can inform the person's next-of-kin of his/her location and at the same time, be updated on the latest news and events. To find out more about DFC, visit the official Facebook page at "Dementia-Friendly Singapore" or [www.dementiafriendly.sg](http://www.dementiafriendly.sg).

## Knowing more as a GP - Be Empowered with Mental Health GP Partnership Programme

Be part of the DFCs by joining the Mental Health GP Partnership Programme to support patients with mild to moderate mental health conditions including dementia. Through this programme, more than 140 GP partners have been trained to diagnose and support persons with mental health needs in the community with a COMMUNITY Intervention Team (COMIT). COMIT complements your clinical care by offering psych-social interventions, case management on a regular basis and referrals for additional services if needed. Join this programme to also gain exclusive access to regular Continuing Medical Education (CME) talks and case discussions on latest mental health related topics.



**As GPs, we don't get many opportunities to work in a team. By partnering with Mental Health GP Partnership Programme, I was able to work with social workers, psychologists and more to help mental health patients. Many patients find it easier to visit their GPs, since we are usually closer in the neighbourhood, with homely and friendly clinic settings that make it easier for them to open up."**

### Dr Keith Ong, Parsons Medical Clinic & Surgery

*GP Partner under Mental Health GP Partnership Programme*



**The AIC team has a wonderful work flow for referral of patients to GP clinics, which has allowed us to play a small part towards improving mental health accessibility. We are glad that our mental health patients can tap on the Community Health Assist Scheme (CHAS) and Medisave Chronic Disease Management Programme (CDMP) to make their treatment easy on their cash flow. With COMIT, they also get easy access to allied health services."**

### Dr Nah Kwang Meng, Dr Nah & Lee Family Clinic

*GP Partner under Mental Health GP Partnership Programme*

## Take the Next Step

To learn more about Mental Health GP Partnership Programme or to sign up for it, contact AIC at [gp@aic.sg](mailto:gp@aic.sg).

If you would like to refer patients/ caregivers to mental health services, you may write in to AIC at [careinmind@aic.sg](mailto:careinmind@aic.sg).