

New graduate diploma course to help boost mental health of youth

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The Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) will launch a graduate diploma course focused on mental health support for young people.

The Graduate Diploma in Youth Work Programme is a joint project of SUSS and the Youth Work Association Singapore (YWAS).

It aims to train and certify social workers to be more equipped to help young people, following a call for more mental health support in Singapore.

There are no existing programmes here to certify those working specifically with young people, and this diploma will help

bridge the gap, according to Mr Nicholas Gabriel Lim, head of the programme.

The programme will follow existing youth frameworks, like the National Youth Work Competency Framework developed by the Ministry of Social and Family Development.

The frameworks will act as guidelines for the course, and as a benchmark tool for lesson planning.

The partnership with YWAS will offer SUSS access to more than 10 youth work sector partners for the students of the course to gain on-the-ground experience through events and programmes.

YWAS will also grant a one-year professional membership to graduates of the course.

YWAS leaders will serve on the



Dr John Tan (left), president of Youth Work Association Singapore, and Associate Professor Lim Lee Ching, dean of the S R Nathan School of Human Development at SUSS, exchanging a fist bump at the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the Graduate Diploma in Youth Work Programme, a joint project, yesterday. With them are (from far left) Mr Nicholas Gabriel Lim, head of the Graduate Diploma in Youth Work Programme at SUSS; Mr Eric Chua, Parliamentary Secretary for Culture, Community and Youth as well as Social and Family Development; and Professor Cheong Hee Kiat, president of SUSS. PHOTO: SINGAPORE UNIVERSITY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

course's advisory panel and teach some modules alongside other YWAS partners who have experi-

ence with youth work.

The intake for the one-year course will be closed in October

and the programme will begin in January next year.

A memorandum of understand-

ing for the programme was signed between SUSS and YWAS yesterday.

Mr Eric Chua, Parliamentary Secretary for Culture, Community and Youth as well as Social and Family Development, was the guest of honour at the event.

Mr Lim said: "All of us in the youth sector recognise there is a gap when it comes to youth work and there have been efforts over the years to try to develop programmes to meet that need. I think it is high time that we are able to fulfil that need."

Mr Chua also noted that the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way young people live and interact with others.

"Some young people have been observed to become socially isolated and reserved as their social life is impacted, while some others have to cope with the pressure of finding a job to alleviate family finances," he said.

"This partnership is timely as we have been striving towards improving support for our youth, so that they can emerge stronger and become more resilient, amid this pandemic and beyond."

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