

LEADING HEALTHCARE

The newsletter of the Healthcare Leadership College

THE HEART OF A LEADER

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The Healthcare Leadership College (HLC), a division of MOH Holdings, supports the building of strong leadership capacity and capabilities for our national healthcare system, in line with the Ministry of Health's vision and strategic priorities.

The Heart of Leadership



*By Prof Pang Weng Sun,
Dean, Healthcare Leadership College*

In my school days, writing nice messages in autograph books was a common practice. We would choose inspiring quotes from great leaders to encourage one another in our future journeys (not that we always understood what we wrote!). Popular quotes included “Look toward the sunshine and you will never see your shadow” from Helen Keller, an American author who lost her vision after an illness in childhood. Another popular one was US President John F Kennedy’s “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country...” In our youthful enthusiasm, we spurred one another to brighter futures. Today – it is no longer ‘fashionable’ to sign autograph books.

*Ask not what
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John F. Kennedy*

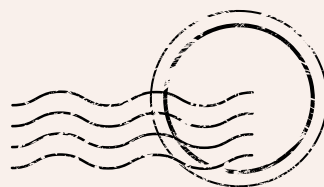
Now that we are in leadership roles, we ask ourselves – what motivates us to persevere despite the challenges we face? Are we inspired by these great leaders and hope we can do likewise? Or do we feel that we have been pushed into these roles and are reluctantly taking on the positions? Do we look forward to stepping down from our roles, or do we look forward to pressing on to higher responsibilities? Who are we doing it for? Ourselves, our families, our society, or some higher calling?

Years ago, I came across an ancient Chinese fictional mythological story “Investiture of gods” where the hero Jiang Ziya waged a war to deliver the kingdom from demons.

At the end of it, the various heroes in the battle were appointed as gods (hence the name of the novel). The interesting ending was that after appointing everyone else – there were no more positions in heaven for Jiang himself! The story ends with him riding away on his mule, an ordinary citizen on earth. As a youth, I used to laugh at how silly the hero was. How could he leave himself out? As I grew older I began to appreciate the wisdom of the writer. Leadership and doing good are not about ourselves.

There is no doubt leadership does bring about recognition (but yes, it brings criticisms too!). What do we gain at the end of it? Reputation? A sense of accomplishment? The satisfaction of seeing things change for the better? The joy of seeing another generation taking on the reins and doing better than us? What really matters?

Someday we will hand over leadership roles to others, just as others have done for us. Does it matter if we are forgotten as another generation moves ahead? Would we not be pleased if our next generation of leaders does better than us? Indeed, we hope for Better Health, Better Care, and a Better Life for our generations to come....



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Leading with

Head

&

Heart



My Leadership Purpose Statement

When I attended the inaugural run of the Leaders for Singapore Healthcare (LSH) milestone leadership programme organised by HLC in 2018, I was asked to pen down my Leadership Purpose statement. It was a meaningful exercise which made me reflect deeply on my leadership journey over the past decades. I wrote that as a leader, not only must I be willing to lead, but I must also lead with integrity. I also wrote about my belief in mutual respect, trust and communication as key components of effective leadership. Respect is earned, not given; communication is the lifeblood of good working outcomes; and most importantly, trust and relationships will bring you the furthest in your career and life.

As young leaders, many of you will be facing different crossroads in your work and lives. Many of you may question whether you are able to step up to the role of a leader, and whether you need to adopt a certain leadership style, or acquire specific skills and knowledge to be more effective as leaders.

I think the exercise of leadership involves two equally important components: Leading with Head as well as Leading with Heart.

Ms Tan Soh Chin

Senior Director (Special Projects)
Office of DGCEO (Medical & Clinical Services),
SingHealth

Currently, Ms Tan Soh Chin is Senior Director (Special Projects), Medical and Clinical Services, SingHealth. Prior to the current appointment, she was the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) at Ministry of Health (MOH) from Jan 2015 to June 2020.

During her stint as CNO, she made invaluable contributions to the nursing profession and practice. She was at the forefront of nursing transformation in formulating nursing development and resource policies, which led to significant improvements in the delivery of nursing care. She also set the policies and strategies on developing and regulating the nursing profession in Singapore.

As Senior Director at SingHealth, she works with Deputy Group CEO (Medical & Clinical Services) and Group Chief Nurse on strategic direction for nursing care, service transformation, and community nursing across the cluster. At KK Women's and Children's Hospital, she works with nursing team on Maternal & Child Health care services projects.

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Leading with Head: Applying Systems Thinking at Work

Learning to see perspectives at the systems level is important as you grow in your leadership. All systems are composed of inter-connected parts, you cannot look at things from one angle only. All parts are connected to each other, and these connections cause the behaviour of one part to affect another, leading sometimes to unintended consequences. To help find new ways to improve an organisation, we need to study its system and the interactions between its elements, identify gaps and issues. This can help improve processes and develop new ideas for innovation.



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Let me give you an example of applying systems thinking at work. When we look at the healthcare policy on nursing manpower, we need to take stock of the current healthcare situation and consider factors such as our healthcare landscape and the Ministry's direction. We need to look at the nursing workforce which includes the various nursing roles, staffing ratios, clinical settings, etc. We also need to understand the nursing regulations stipulated by the Singapore Nursing Board (SNB) as well as requirements from both Pre Employment Training(PET) and Continuing Education and Training (CET) of Nursing Education. Basically, we need to have big picture thinking and a holistic view of the situation; and to understand how individuals, teams, and divisions work together collectively to address issues within the complex healthcare system.

Leading With Your Heart: Be Yourself

I have observed that many introverts are not confident about taking on leadership roles, there seems to be a perception that leaders need to be extroverted, confident, and at ease with attention. However, introverts can function very well as leaders. I am by nature, an introverted person; I am more introspective and like to unwind by taking solitary walks at the park near my house. What has helped me accept and willingly take on leadership roles, is that I know that I am doing it not for myself but for the

nurses and profession. Leadership is not about self, position, power or authority. I have to reflect the voices of my people and they need to have a confident, composed leader representing them.

There are many leadership styles – Transformational, Democratic, Laissez-faire, Autocratic and Servant – which work well in different situations and for different people. You have to know yourself well to know your leadership style. You cannot copy someone else's style effectively no matter how much you look up to the person as you will find it difficult to sustain that false image. Hence, do not pretend to be an extrovert if you are not. Just be yourself and lead with your heart.

Closing Words

Leadership is an on-going journey; you need to continue to search for ways to be more effective. Throughout my many years in nursing, I was given opportunities to learn new things and this strengthened my leadership skills. I learned lessons in every situation, good or bad; I learned how I could be a better leader in future. I became wiser, braver, more resilient, and tougher.

To all our young leaders, believe in yourself, and lead with your head and your heart. I have always held this quote by the late Ms Eleanor Roosevelt close to me: "To handle yourself, use your head; to handle others, use your heart". I wish you all a leadership journey filled with joy and purpose.





Turning Hearts Towards the Intellectually Disabled in Singapore

IDHealth

In the 4th Singapore Nurse Leaders Programme's learning journey, participants had the opportunity to visit IDHealth, an initiative by Happee Hearts Movement, which is community-based, integrated health team committed to addressing the complex healthcare needs of adults with Intellectual Disability (ID). The nurses interacted with staff who shared their experience about running a clinic catering to those living with ID. Its founder, Dr Chen Shiling, hosted the cohort for the visit and shared her leadership reflections on IDHealth's journey thus far. Our nurses were inspired by Dr Chen's passion and they came to be aware of how the needs of the ID population in Singapore could be better met.

HOW I FOUND THE HEART FOR THE ID POPULATION IN SINGAPORE

"My eyes were opened"

As a 17 years old teenager, I felt a stirring in me to volunteer which led me to MINDS on a bright sunny Sunday afternoon. As I stepped into the volunteer-run centre and met a group of persons with ID for the first time, I was taken aback, and... terrified. They looked different, sounded different and behaved different. I did not know what to do, nor did I know how to behave.

So, I did what people sometimes do when we encounter something unfamiliar; flight. My defence mechanism kicked in, and I made a quick decision that this was not for me. I told myself to keep quiet, lie low, and yearned desperately for the end of the afternoon to come. My plan was simple - I would say my goodbyes and never return.

However, at the end of the session, instead of feeling relief, an inexplicable emotion overcame me. As I stood quietly watching families come to pick their loved ones with ID up from the centre, something about the chaotic and noisy scene unfolding before my eyes moved me. The people with ID were waving their goodbyes, laughing loudly, and giving hoots of joy. Suddenly, I felt time stand still for a moment. I said almost in disbelief to myself, "Maybe I should come back next week and give this another try..."

I did. And returned every Sunday for the next six years until I graduated from medical school. The rest as they say, is history.

WHY I FOUNDED IDHEALTH

"I couldn't look away"

After I graduated from university, I stopped volunteering weekly with the centre due to work commitments. I was caught up with all the usual things that occur in the life of a junior doctor.

However, in 2010, five years after graduation, I felt another tugging in my heart. I returned to MINDS again. I met the

*They looked different,
sounded different and
behaved different*

CEO and said to him that I wanted to do something for this population, something healthcare related. His words to me were, "Sure, they have many health problems, but I don't know what! So just do whatever you want!" With that blank cheque, I got to work.

I sat down with a group of adults with ID and their ageing parents, and started asking them questions about their health. This evolved quickly to volunteer-run health screening events that I conducted not only for MINDS, but also for other organizations including APSN, CPAS and DSA. Through these events, I picked up many health problems in persons with ID, and listened to the stories of numerous families as they struggled to navigate the healthcare system. The more health screenings I conducted, the more I was convinced that there was so much that needed to be done. Sadly, it also made me feel increasingly helpless. I witnessed first-hand how persons with ID needed holistic and specialized services that could cater specifically to their needs, but when I looked around me, there were none to be found.

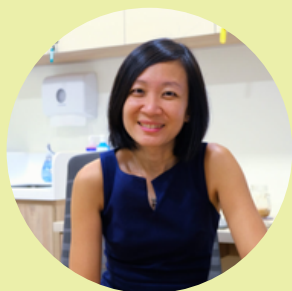
Determined to find a way to bridge this gap, I approached the senior doctors I knew to support my vision, and help me establish a healthcare service for this vulnerable group. However, there were too many other competing priorities, and this was not one of those priority areas. Most seniors in fact advised me to continue my specialist training in other fields and not focus on this this area.

"I knew the gap was real and the needs were immense. Hard as it might be, uncertain as the path was, I had to take active and concrete steps."

At that juncture, there were two choices laid before me. Take the advice of my seniors and stay, to complete my training in other areas, and perhaps continue as a volunteer for this group. Or leave, to focus on developing a healthcare service for persons with ID and pursue it independently.

I deliberated over it and chose the latter. I knew the gap was real and the needs were immense. Hard as it might be, uncertain as the path was, I had to take active and concrete steps. My eyes had been opened, and I couldn't look away.

That was how IDHealth was born.



- Dr Chen Shiling

Founder of Happee Hearts Movement



REFLECTIONS FROM THE 4TH SINGAPORE NURSE LEADERS PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS

IDHealth is a community-based, integrated health team. They are committed to meeting the needs of adults with intellectual disability and their caregivers, as both are intertwined in each other's lives. It was an eye-opener for me when I visited them during SNLP (Singapore Nurse Leaders Programme).

With access to healthcare now, many patients in their care lead better lives, whereas in the past, the social-health needs of the ID were often left neglected and forgotten. The challenging nature of caring for persons with ID meant that families and caregivers tend to shoulder the burden alone instead of seeking help. Hence, the health of these patients is often poorly monitored in the official records and their care needs are rarely presented in our healthcare system.

What struck me the most was the sheer determination and compassion Dr Chen Shiling has for her patients and the ID community. To establish this health service, she knocked on many doors, faced rejections but her unyielding belief and calling drove her to make this happen. This learning journey has made me aware of the hidden needs of people who may fall through the cracks of society and how Singapore can better meet their needs.

- *Ms Jessica Chang Xiu Lan*

Nurse Clinician, WH, NHG



The learning journey at IDHealth was inspiring as Dr Chen spoke with great enthusiasm about her purpose and passion for the population living with ID.

As nurse leaders, we often tread through tough times, stopping at crossroads to question our purpose. Dr Chen's resilience in her work and persistence in believing that she can make a difference to the community rekindled a spark in my work as a community nurse.

Work in community nursing is like a triathlon. We need to constantly innovate in various ways to reach our end goals. Through this SNLP journey, the ONE Healthcare leadership framework has been a key guiding principle for me as a leader. The values and personal qualities like Compassion, Humility and Resilience serve as a reminder to me as we journey together working towards HealthierSG collaborating with various partners in the community.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." - Helen Keller

- *Ms Lim Hui Shan*

Nurse Clinician, RHS, NUHS



Passion sparkled from her eyes and warmth radiated from her smile when Dr Chen Shiling shared about her inspirational journey caring for patients with intellectual disabilities (ID) and their families. She traded the stability of a promising career with uncertainties, knocking on every possible door for opportunities to bridge the gap to improve care for this often forgotten group of minority. Beyond just volunteering at MINDs, she took her husband to visit the patients and families in their homes with their own means.

To me, she exemplifies the modern version of Mother Theresa. Her act of service is the epitome of true leadership which extends beyond caring for an individual to the whole family unit.

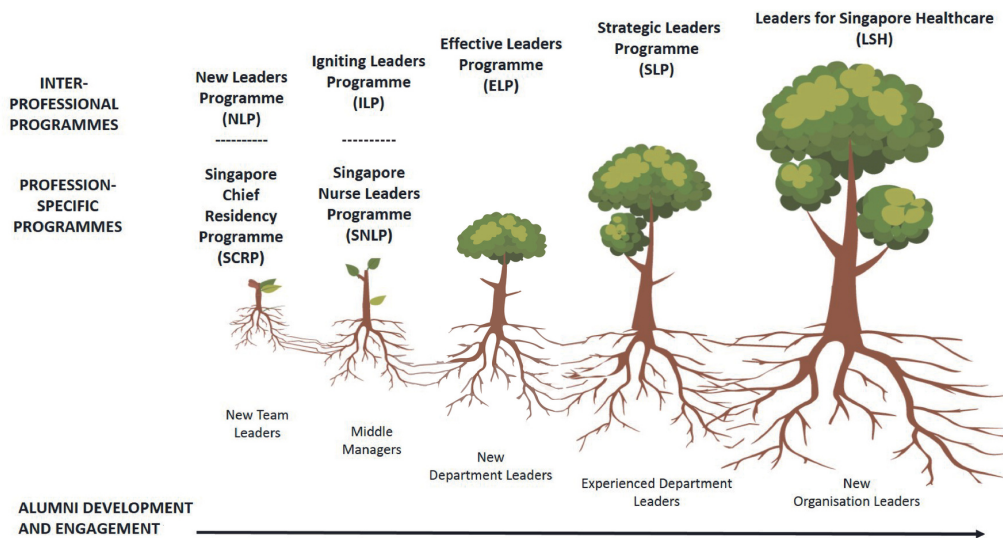
Personally, the road less traveled has not been smooth sailing for me. Aptly, the encounter with Dr Chen delivered a booster shot of resolution in me to keep treading on, with the hope that I may still be the change I desire to see. Until then, I pray this immunity will last a lifetime!

- *Ms Olivine Tan Ting Jia*

Nurse Clinician, KKH, SHS



Leadership Milestone Programmes Cross-Profession



- Foster a one healthcare family mindset
- Build shared values and ethos amongst public healthcare leaders
- Develop understanding of key healthcare policies, the rationale and principles behind the policies
- Strengthen leadership capabilities of healthcare leaders to enable change and drive strategies to transform healthcare delivery
- Nurture a community of healthcare leaders across professions and across the healthcare family to bring about greater collaboration and sharing, and inspiration to the next generation of leaders

NEW LEADERS PROGRAMME (NLP)



The New Leaders Programme (NLP) supports the development of high potential first time team leaders in the healthcare family.

The transition from being an individual contributor to leading a team is a significant and challenging milestone. The NLP encourages participants to explore their new role: How does the Singapore healthcare system work? What is my role in the larger healthcare system? What does it mean to lead? What does it mean to lead in the healthcare family?

Programme Manager(s):

Jennie Tan
Carol Tang
Nicole Lee

The NLP also provides opportunities for participants to network across healthcare institutions and professions.

IGNITING LEADERS PROGRAMME (ILP)

The Igniting Leaders Programme (ILP) aims to strengthen participants' systems perspectives by providing opportunities for them to examine our healthcare philosophy and policy choices, and understand our larger strategic goals and priorities. This also helps participants understand one another's role in the healthcare system.

The ILP will enable participants to gain insight into their own leadership practice, especially in building their teams, and allows them to re-ignite their sense of purpose in healthcare. The ILP will also be an important platform for participants to foster peer support networks across healthcare institutions and professions.



Programme Manager:
Chia Li Hui

EFFECTIVE LEADERS PROGRAMME (ELP)



Programme Manager:
Goh You Li

The Effective Leaders Programme (ELP) is designed to deepen participants' understanding of the healthcare system - its complexity and strategic direction, and widen their perspectives beyond the professional and institutional viewpoints.

The ELP also supports participants in reflecting on their personal leadership practice, and focus on driving change and building teams with a collective mission.

The programme emphasises the building of shared experiences and perspectives among participants, and fosters a trusted peer support community for mutual support and collaboration.

STRATEGIC LEADERS PROGRAMME (SLP)



The Strategic Leaders Programme (SLP) will support our senior leaders to adopt a one healthcare mindset, and appreciate the importance of a whole of system approach that include perspectives beyond healthcare.

Participants will have the opportunity to reflect on their collective leadership and collaborative practice as they lead larger and more diverse teams within and across healthcare institutions.

Programme Manager:
Jared Koh

The SLP is also designed for participants to deepen networks and relationships among their peers to strengthen collaboration in the healthcare family.

LEADERS FOR SINGAPORE HEALTHCARE (LSH)

The Leaders for Singapore Healthcare (LSH) is HLC's signature programme for senior healthcare leaders with organisational level responsibilities.

As senior healthcare leaders, participants will examine their roles as leaders of and for the Singapore health eco-system, with a larger influence across institutions and clusters, and beyond public healthcare.

The programme is conducted over four months, in four segments, and includes a study trip.



Programme Manager:
Chu Min Lian

Leadership Milestone Programmes Profession-Specific

SINGAPORE CHIEF RESIDENCY PROGRAMME (SCRIP)



Programme Manager(s):
Regine Tan
Tan Hui

Singapore's healthcare landscape is evolving rapidly with new delivery systems, policies, and educational structures. In this time of transformation, effective physician leadership is essential, and the Singapore Chief Residency Programme (SCRIP) prepares tomorrow's doctors to meet these challenges, promote excellence in the medical education, and advance Singapore's Public Healthcare System.

SINGAPORE NURSE LEADERS PROGRAMME (SNLP)

The Singapore Nurse Leaders Programme (SNLP) is developed as part of the Future Nursing Career Review Committee's (FNCRC) recommendation to equip future nursing leaders with prior experience in community care before progressing to take on higher leadership positions.

With an increasingly system-level approach towards nursing at the RHS-level, the programme is designed to equip nurses with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead care across multiple facilities- acute and community sectors. The SNLP aims to groom level 2 nurse leaders to be change agents with strong leadership and policy perspectives, and this is achieved via a 2-prong approach, in-person seminars and attachment to the community care sector.



Programme Manager:
Maryse Koh

Alumni Programmes

The College also hosts events and talks for alumni of its milestone programmes, such as fireside chats with senior healthcare leaders, policy workshops, and learning journeys. Alumni events are open by invitation only, and most fees are fully subsidised by the Healthcare Leadership College.

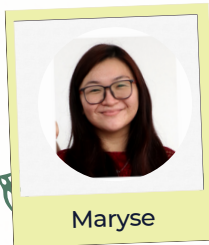
Programme Manager(s):
Goh You Li
Chu Min Lian
Chia Li Hui



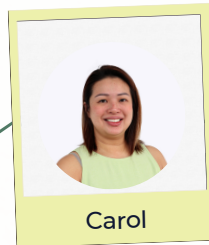
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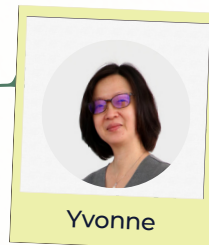
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Maryse



Carol



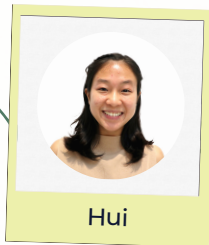
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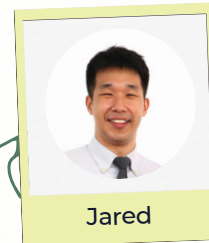
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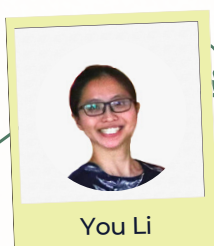
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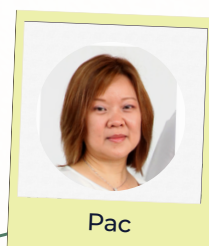
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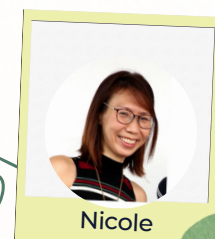
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ABOUT THE HEALTHCARE LEADERSHIP COLLEGE

The Healthcare Leadership College (HLC), a division of MOH Holdings, supports the building of strong leadership capacity and capabilities for our national healthcare system, in line with the Ministry of Health's vision and strategic priorities.

We aspire to be a keystone and trusted partner in developing leaders of and for Singapore healthcare, and in building bridges and growing community across agencies, clusters, institutions and professions in the Singapore healthcare ecosystem.

Find out more here: www.hlc.mohh.com.sg

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We hope you enjoy the newsletter. The next issue of Leading Healthcare will be in September 2023. We welcome your feedback and suggestions. Do drop the Leading Healthcare team a note at hlc@mohh.com.sg.

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