

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY MR TAN CHUAN-JIN
SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT AND
ADVISOR TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE
AT BEYOND THE LABEL FEST 2019
ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2019 AT TIMBRE+**

Ms Anita Fam, President, National Council of Social Service (NCSS)

Mrs Anita Low-Lim, Co-chair, Youth Alliance

Mr Cho Ming Xiu, Co-chair, Youth Alliance

Mr Edward Chia, Co-founder and Managing Director, Timbre Group

Ladies and gentlemen

1. Good evening. I am happy to join you at the inaugural Beyond the Label Fest, organised by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) and Youth Alliance, to unite against mental health stigma.

What Beyond the Label has brought about

2. The Singapore Mental Health Study 2016 by the Institute of Mental Health has shown that 1 in 7 will experience a mental health condition in his or her lifetime, yet more than 3 in 4 do not seek help.
3. Beyond the Label was launched last year to shift public attitudes and correct misconceptions and I am glad to hear that it has been successful in raising public awareness and increasing societal acceptance of persons with mental health conditions.

Inaugural Helpbot and Fest to Fight Against Mental Health Stigma

4. To reduce the barrier to seeking help, we are officially launching the Beyond the Label Helpbot on Facebook today. While help resources in the community are available, people may not be aware of them. The Helpbot was developed to make these resources more accessible, and serves as a directory for persons with mental health conditions and their caregivers to seek appropriate and timely help.

5. Through the curated activities at today's Beyond the Label Fest, I am confident you will get a better understanding on mental wellness and henceforth become more aware of those around you who may need your support.

Beyond the Label to Empower Youth as Driver for Change

6. According to a 2017 NCSS Attitude Study, young people are more open to talking about issues related to mental health, and tend to have more positive attitudes towards persons with mental health conditions.

7. Hence, we hope to empower more youth to champion the fight against mental health stigma, and in the days to come, see more ground-up initiatives organised by youth for their peers.

8. As a start, a network of agencies had come together to form the Youth Alliance, to bring about better collaboration and more effective outreach to the youth. In doing so, we hope that our youth are equipped with skills and are empowered to spearhead ground-up initiatives to address mental health stigma, and to support peers in their recovery journey.

9. One of the projects that these youth representatives embarked on was to design the Activation Box at today's Beyond the Label Fest, an immersive multi-sensory experience to help simulate the daily struggles a person with mental health condition faces. This experience will help build a better understanding and empathy in participants towards persons with mental health conditions, and I encourage you to have a go later, if you have not already tried it.

Conclusion

10. For youth, parents are an important influence and as parents, we should be more attentive to our children's needs. We should bring our children to seek professional help early, if we notice anything amiss.
11. As a society, we need to work towards being more inclusive and close the knowledge gap about mental health conditions. We also need to open up and talk about mental health to those around us. And this is what NCSS' public education campaign, Beyond the Label, aims to achieve.
12. Lastly, I would like to thank the key organiser NCSS, partners such as Tote Board, Youth Alliance, Timbre+, JTC and many others who have contributed to make this event possible. It takes everyone to build and sustain an inclusive community, and these efforts extend beyond today. Please join me in appreciating them.
13. Thank you, and have a wonderful evening ahead.