

‘Five-in-one’ step to wellness

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Studio set up to help former mental illness patients integrate into society

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FINDING work has just gotten a little bit easier for those who have recovered from mental illness.

All too often, they want to join the workforce, but faced with obstacles, they often give up in their efforts.

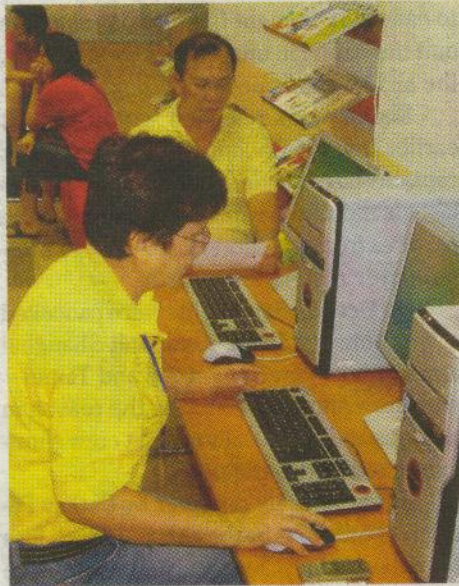
But a “five-in-one” wellness centre that has just been set up could help them integrate into society in a shorter span of time.

The Tze Hng Wellness Studio incorporates a training centre, employment resources centre, psychology clinic, activity centre and a mini-library.

The idea, when it was first brought up, so impressed Member of Parliament Yeo Guat Kwang that with his support, it took just three months to set up the studio.

Situated within his constituency in a converted residents committee office, the centre was officially launched yesterday.

“Very often, patients, upon discharge from hospital want to join the workforce, but because of lack of skills like interpersonal



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WORKING WELL: Ms Alice Tan, a work care agent with Aljunied GRC, demonstrates the use of one of computers at the Tze Hng Wellness Studio in Hougang.

communication and office skills, often give up after a few attempts,” said Ms Porsche Poh, executive director of mental health advocacy group, the Silver Ribbon Project, who mooted the idea.

The studio will address this difficulty. Job search tools are within easy reach at the centre – with courses teaching basic skills

and access to computers, newspapers, a fax machine, photocopier and telephones.

Work Care Agents – a community initiative started by Mr Yeo in May – will also provide assistance and link job seekers with recruitment drives. This service is for all residents in the Hougang, Sengkang and Punggol area and not just newly-recovered patients.

Mr Leon Luai, chairman of Aljunied-Hougang Citizen’s Consultative Committee, said the studio will help these patients build self-esteem, and encourage them to mix with other members of the community. “It will help create more understanding and foster acceptance,” he said.

The studio will also hold free weekly psychology clinics to help evaluate and pick up mental problems early.

“It will also provide interim help for recovered patients to let them talk about their worries and problems,” said psychologist Dr Chelvi Rajakan, one of those volunteering at the centre. This is an important aspect as dealing with problems when they crop up can help prevent relapse, she said. There will also be an activity centre to organise talks and outings as well as a mini-health library.

Said Mr Yeo, the studio’s patron: “It is good for us to put all these aspects together to look at mental wellness in a more holistic approach and help our residents better.”

The Tze Hng Wellness Studio is located at Block 616 Hougang Ave 8 #01-386 and is open from 9am to 5pm, Mondays to Fridays. Work care agents will be available from 10am to 4pm.