



EMCC Newsletter | February 2014

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## IN THE NEWS

### EMCC'S PROGRAMMES TO HELP FAMILIES

This year EMCC (Eagles Mediation & Counselling Centre) will be putting more focus on working with married couples with a view to ensuring couples stay happily married and build healthy families.

"We're interested in building strong marriages and healthy families," said Mr Benjamin Chan, EMCC's General Manager. "This is part of our Marriage Journey pillar. We're working with couples at every level, from pre-marriage to empty nesters."

For couples work, EMCC is collaborating with the US-based Gottman Institute and bringing in experts to run workshops. On April 26, EMCC is running a workshop for about 50 couples at Changi Cove. It is also holding workshops for therapists who can help couples – Level 1 on April 24 to 25 and Level 2 on April 28 to April 30.

The aim of helping couples enhance marriages is to help prevent divorces which will have negative impact on the couples and their children.

EMCC projects more work this year with troubled couples as it is on the Family Court's referral list of PROJECT HEART which targets couples at risk of divorce and those who have already filed for divorce, but are willing to consider reconciliation. Referrals are also expected for divorcing couples with young children who need to undergo compulsory mediation and counselling.

In addition, EMCC is proposing a programme for the Council for Third Age (C3A) to keep the marriages of older couples "on fire" and give them tips on how to manage conflicts in their relationships.

Besides providing counselling at our centre for troubled families and individuals, EMCC will be offering emotional and other life skills for volunteers of the Community Justice Centre. These volunteers work with unrepresented litigants.

For mediation, EMCC is engaging people at different levels and using our training and education platform to increase awareness and receive referrals.

For 2014, EMCC will be offering 4 basic and 2 advanced family mediation workshops to train professionals at the Social Service Institute. EMCC will also conduct customized mediation training for organisations.

In addition, EMCC will build on the momentum from the past few years and conduct our Parent-Teen Conflict Resolution workshops for fathers only and mothers only in schools and communities.

### WORKSHOPS FOR COUPLES AND PROFESSIONALS ON ENHANCING MARRIAGES



EMCC will be holding workshops for couples and therapists who work with couples in April this year. The couples workshop will be on April 26, 2014 at Changi Cove to help them strengthen their relationships. For therapists, the Level 1 workshop will be on April 24 to April 25 while Level 2 will be on April 28 to April 30. Both will be held at EMCC's training room.

Offered for the first time in Singapore, the April 26 "The Gottman Seven Principles Program for Couples" workshop is based on the internationally acclaimed research of Dr. John Gottman as presented in his New York Times Bestselling book *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. It will be conducted by Dr Jeffrey White, a licensed Marriage & Family Therapist and also a Certified Gottman Method Couples Therapist.

Couples often wait an average of six years from the time they identify problems in their relationship until they seek help. This observation is based on research by Dr John Gottman.

"We hope that by providing a workshop based on the latest research about what makes marriages succeed, and what happens when relationships deteriorate and fail, couples will be encouraged to get help and get it much sooner," said Mr Billy Chan, EMCC's Assistant Manager, Counselling Services, who is involved in EMCC's Marriage Journey.

The aim of the workshop is to provide couples with practical tools to enhance and strengthen their relationships in a variety of ways. These include deepening their love maps, fostering fondness and admiration, facilitating turning towards each other, accepting influence, solving solvable problems, overcoming gridlock, creating shared meaning and maintaining gains.

The workshop is appropriate for couples contemplating engagement, pre-marital couples, couples married for decades.

The Level 1 and 2 workshops are suitable for marriage facilitators, clinicians, counsellors, pastors, priests, mental health practitioners and employee assistance professionals. The Level 1 "Bridging the Couple Chasm" workshop will provide new insights into couples' struggles using research-based assessments and effective interventions. The Level 2 "Assessment, Intervention and Co-Morbidities" workshop helps deepen participants' understanding of the Gottman Method Couples Therapy.

### FATHERS LEARN TIPS TO MANAGE PARENT-TEEN CONFLICTS



"(I) have a lot of good insights in how to properly deal or address conflicts during and after it happens," said Mr William Villaviray after attending EMCC's Father-Teen Conflict Resolution workshop on January 18, 2014.

Another participant, Mr John Soh, said it was an excellent workshop. Learning points he found most useful and applicable as a father included "how to break/disengage conflicts as a mediator" and "not to let silence or stonewalling get into a more serious situation."

The workshop at Church of Our Lady Star of the Sea was attended by about 30 fathers who were keen to pick up parenting tips on how to deal with their teens. It was organised under the auspices of Dads@Communities, an initiative by the Dads for Life movement and the Fathers Action Network.

EMCC's father-teen resolution programme is part of EMCC's upstream initiative to help build stable families. It covered topics including types and levels of conflicts and five golden rules for conflict management.

### FIXING MARITAL STRESS HELPS CHILDREN

A distressed marital couple, Mr and Mrs Tan\* (pseudonym used to protect their identities), sought help from our counsellor when they found they were feeling frustrated with their two kids. They had noticed that they became angry easily when their young children misbehaved.

Mr and Mrs Tan were not happy about the state of affairs at home. Mrs Tan complained about her husband, who had not been actively involved in doing house chores. She did not feel loved and felt that he was unable to feel connected in the marriage. On the other hand, Mr Tan felt rejected. He was unable to connect with his wife due to her constant nagging and their conflicts.

In the course of the counselling, Mr and Mrs Tan found that their roles had changed from husband/wife to father/mother and this contributed to the stress in the family. They had forgotten their initial roles as husband and wife and their marriage became stale. This was mainly because of the many responsibilities and challenges they faced with the arrival of their kids.

After going through 8 counselling sessions, Mr and Mrs Tan were able to rebuild their relationship. Our counsellor helped them to reflect on what made them react in a certain way and taught them new skills in communication to apply to their relationship. This helped the couple to understand their needs and regain their intimacy.

It was wise of the couple to have sought couple counselling and not delay the process as it could have made the relationship deteriorate. As a happier couple, they were also better parents.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

**Eagles Mediation & Counselling Centre (EMCC)**  
January 29

EMCC would like to wish those celebrating Chinese New Year, a very happy and blessed lunar new year. 马到成功!!

**GONG XI FA CAI**  
Wishing you peace, good health and prosperity this Chinese New Year.  
Help prevent troubled lives and build healthy families.

Like · Comment · Share  
Angela Mitakidis, Joel Shinma, Alvina Ng Shih Chi and 7 others like this.

**Eagles Mediation & Counselling Centre (EMCC)** shared a link.  
January 17

Maybe we should learn from this parent. #healthyfamilies #happymarriages

**Everything You Need to Know About Parenting Via Post-It Notes**  
www.huffingtonpost.com

The first time work-at-home dad Chris Illuminati was home alone with his son Evan, who is now almost 4, he wrote down everything he'd need to remember on one Post-it note as a joke: "Feed baby, change baby, don't

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We are grateful to all our donors who have supported our work all these years. Your continued donation will enable us to provide subsidized counselling and mediation services for low-income families facing difficult times as well as public education workshops. Thank you for helping us build stable, harmonious families and communities.

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