


Hope Times



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IN THE NEWS

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EMCC to start Love Notes course

EMCC plans to start a new course called Love Notes towards the end of the year to serve couples planning to get married as well as couples married for 5 to 9 years.

The free Love Notes programme is not a Marriage Preparation Programme but a Marriage Enrichment programme. It is designed to help couples kick-start their marriage journey and assist them to identify areas in their relationship that need further development and help them accordingly.

The course which comprises video training and activities will be conducted by Mrs Monica Fernando, EMCC's counsellor who also trains pre-marital couples for marriage. She attended the training sessions conducted by Marriage Central which is bringing this programme to Singapore couples.

"Using a tool like Love Notes which will enrich marriage is of paramount importance to the journey of marriage," said Mrs. Fernando. "We hope to attract more couples to attend as it's a free course so cost should not be a barrier."

The course over 4 weeks will cover the following:

- Session 1: Look ahead - Explore 4 important areas of decision-making which have been shown to be key indicators of a couple's marital satisfaction.



- Session 2: Open your hearts - Discuss how trust is developed in a marriage, as well as introduce healthy listening and non-verbal communication techniques.
- Session 3: Value your differences - Provide a working knowledge of how gender differences impact relationships and share useful techniques for conflict resolution.
- Session 4: Energize your lives - Introduction to motivation styles to help couples identify why they do what they do and how to support each other.



Open House to promote mediation services



On August 15, 2013, EMCC held an Open House for staff of Family Service Centres (FSCs) in Singapore to promote greater awareness and familiarization about mediation services provided by EMCC.

A total of 22 guests, including staff of the Ministry of Social and Family Development and the National Council of Social Service, turned up for the informal tea-time talk with our principal mediator, Lim Lei Theng. Ms Lim is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore.

"Mediation service is still not as widely known a service," said Mr Benjamin Chan, EMCC's General Manager. "We hope to be able to help FSC social workers in direct contact with clients to identify issues their clients face which can be best resolved through mediation."

After the Open House, Ms Ann Lee, a social worker at Covenant FSC, said, "I'm clearer now about the services of EMCC and the networking possibilities." Since then, EMCC has received some queries and three cases have been channeled to the mediation department. EMCC has been reaching out to FSCs since last year with a scheme for them to refer a suitable case of family dispute to EMCC for mediation where the parties (first-time clients) will receive a fee waiver for their first mediation session.

EMCC expects to see an increase in such cases in which the agency can help underwrite the cost. "We want to help clients referred by FSCs for mediation to deal with the monetary

barrier," said Mr Chan. The scheme is part of EMCC's ongoing mission and commitment to work alongside the FSCs to bring HOPE to families embroiled in painful conflicts such as divorce, cases dealing with custody and maintenance issues

How to deal with home conflicts

Dr John Ng, speaker on the topic "Conflicts@Home-Fighting well, recovering better" at the COMPASS Speaker Series 2013 at Zhonghua Secondary School on the August 17, 2013 shared candidly on his latest conflict with his teenager and how he resolved it.

When his daughter moved to a new school overseas, he took time to visit her. His zeal to help her settle in "embarrassed" his daughter, who saw it as micromanagement. He thought she was ungrateful. His wife had to step in to ease the tension. Eventually, Dr Ng had to back off and learn to manage his own emotions.

During the workshop, Dr Ng engaged the 350 attendees by sharing from both his personal experience of seeking help, as well as his expertise in conflict management. Validating parents about the challenges they faced, Dr Ng also talked about the teenage brain, the importance of self awareness, and the necessity of getting help when things do get out of control.

Dr Ng is Founding Chairman and current Honorary Vice-Chairman of EMCC. He is also the President of Meta, which provides leadership development, and is an expert in mediation and conflict management.



The COMPASS Speakers Series organized by Community and Parents in Support of Schools is a series of talks, seminars and sharing sessions by inspiring and reputable speakers and experts on parenting.

Client story: How counselling helps teenager

The guidance given by our counsellor during a difficult period in a troubled teenager's life has helped the boy to integrate himself so he did not get into trouble in school and stayed on for his "O" levels.

Even though the teenager is doing well in his studies now, our counsellor still follows up with Brian* (pseudonym used to protect his identity) who was brought to our centre last year by his grandmother and aunt.

Brian's concerned relatives noticed that the boy was struggling in school at a critical time of his school life. They connected with EMCC for help for Brian, who comes from a single parent home where his widowed mother has to work long hours to support him and his sibling.

During the sessions which took place over almost six months, our counsellor gave Brian the chance to express his fears and anxieties. He provided guidance to the teenager so he could gain self-esteem and build a better relationship with his mother and sibling who had been "bullying" him.

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