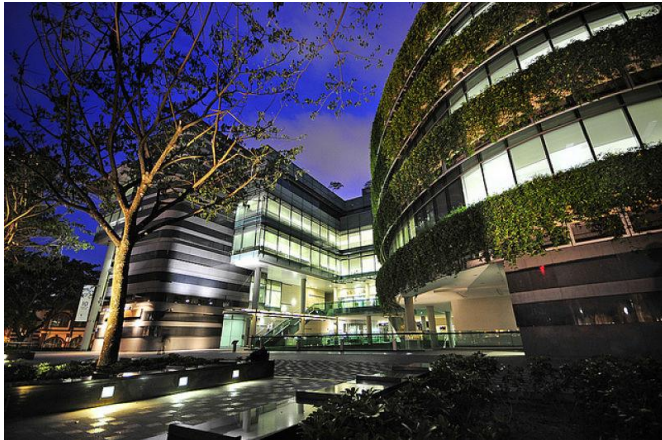# Embedding Holistic Wellbeing into the Fabric of the University Through Fostering A Resilient Student & Staff Community

Presented by:
Alvin Sim, Singapore Management University

SMU
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Singapore Management University

- Singapore's third oldest autonomous university; established in 2000

- SMU mission: to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge-based economy

- Total enrolment: ~12,000 across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes

- 8 Schools offering a range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes, and a growing number of executive development and professional programmes

Resilience and Wellbeing

- Resilience: the active process through which we develop the awareness of and the ability to make choices towards a more fulfilling life, even when faced with difficult circumstances

- Resilience and wellbeing are inextricably linked. According to many empirical research studies, there is a **mutually reducing relationship** between resilience and mental illbeing, such as depression, anxiety and negative emotions

- The **mutually enhancing relationship** between resilience and positive mental health has also been established. Resilience has been shown to be positively correlated with positive indicators of mental health, such as life satisfaction, subjective well-being, and positive emotions

- At SMU, we approach overall student & staff wellbeing through developing the skill of resilience in our students & staff

Resilience and Wellbeing

- A holistic wellbeing framework: **whole-of-university proactive and upstream approach** towards supporting our students' mental health.

- By doing so, the University is not only improving the likelihood of student success, but also helping students find their footing to thrive and succeed, providing a pathway to a life of flourishing.

Resilience and Wellbeing

- Aims to develop resilience in **six inter-related dimensions of wellness** in students - Physical, Intellectual, Social, Emotional, Career and Financial.

- A three-pronged approach of:

EDUCATION   imparting knowledge and skills (to faculty, staff and students), and shaping attitudes

ENCOURAGEMENT   providing professional and peer support through various platforms

EXPERIENCES   broadening students' emotional and psychological horizons through authentic learning environments

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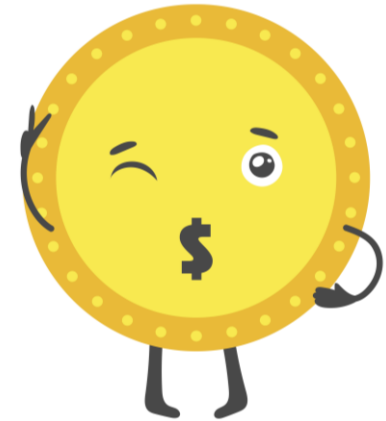SINGAPORE MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY

The 6 Dimensions of Resilience

Career – employability, skills, self-value, relevance

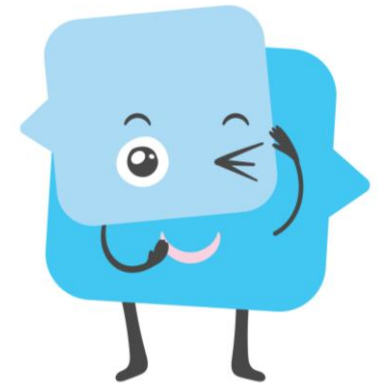Emotional – self-awareness, feelings, emotions, reactions

Financial – financial literacy, expense management, financial health, security

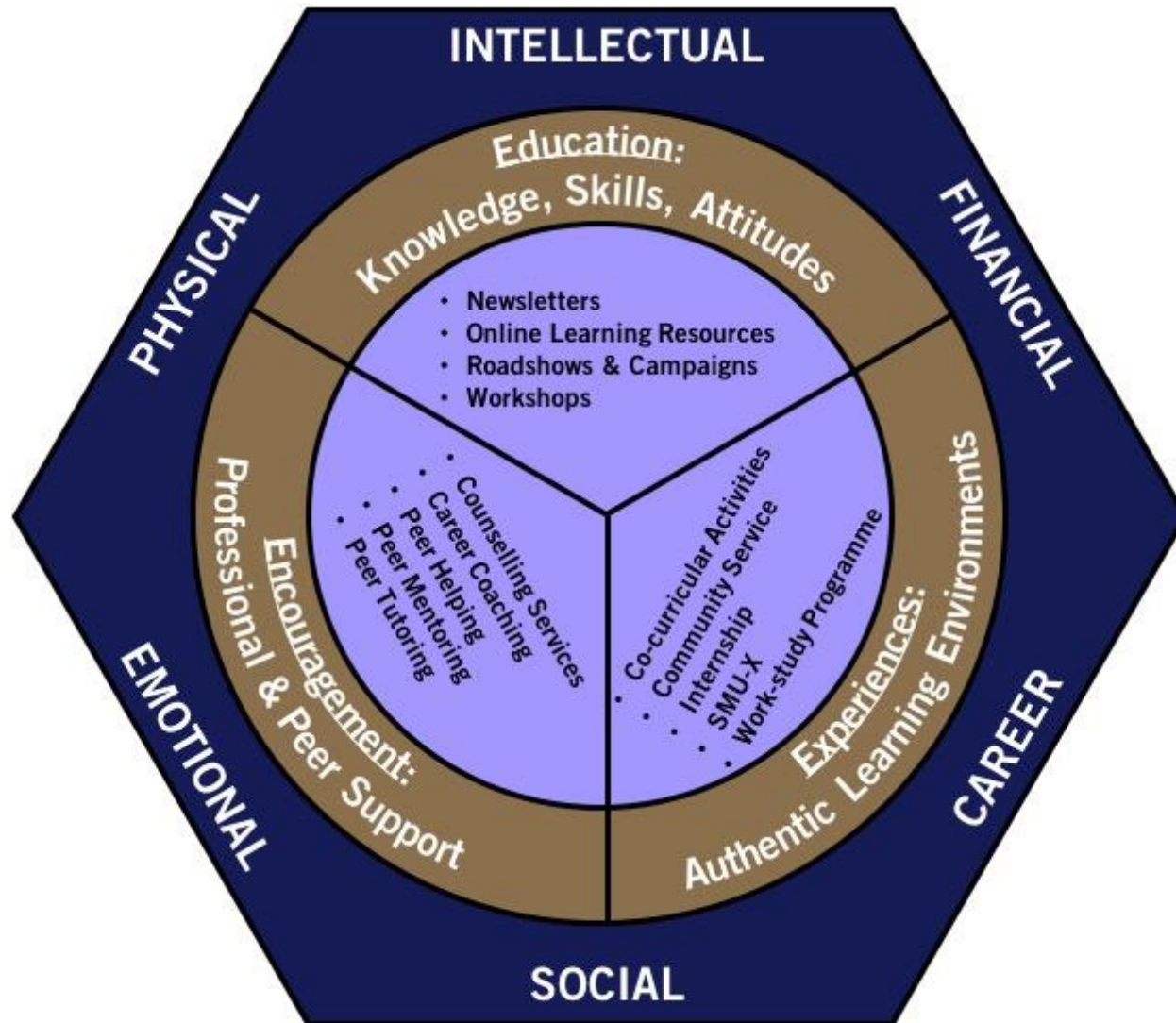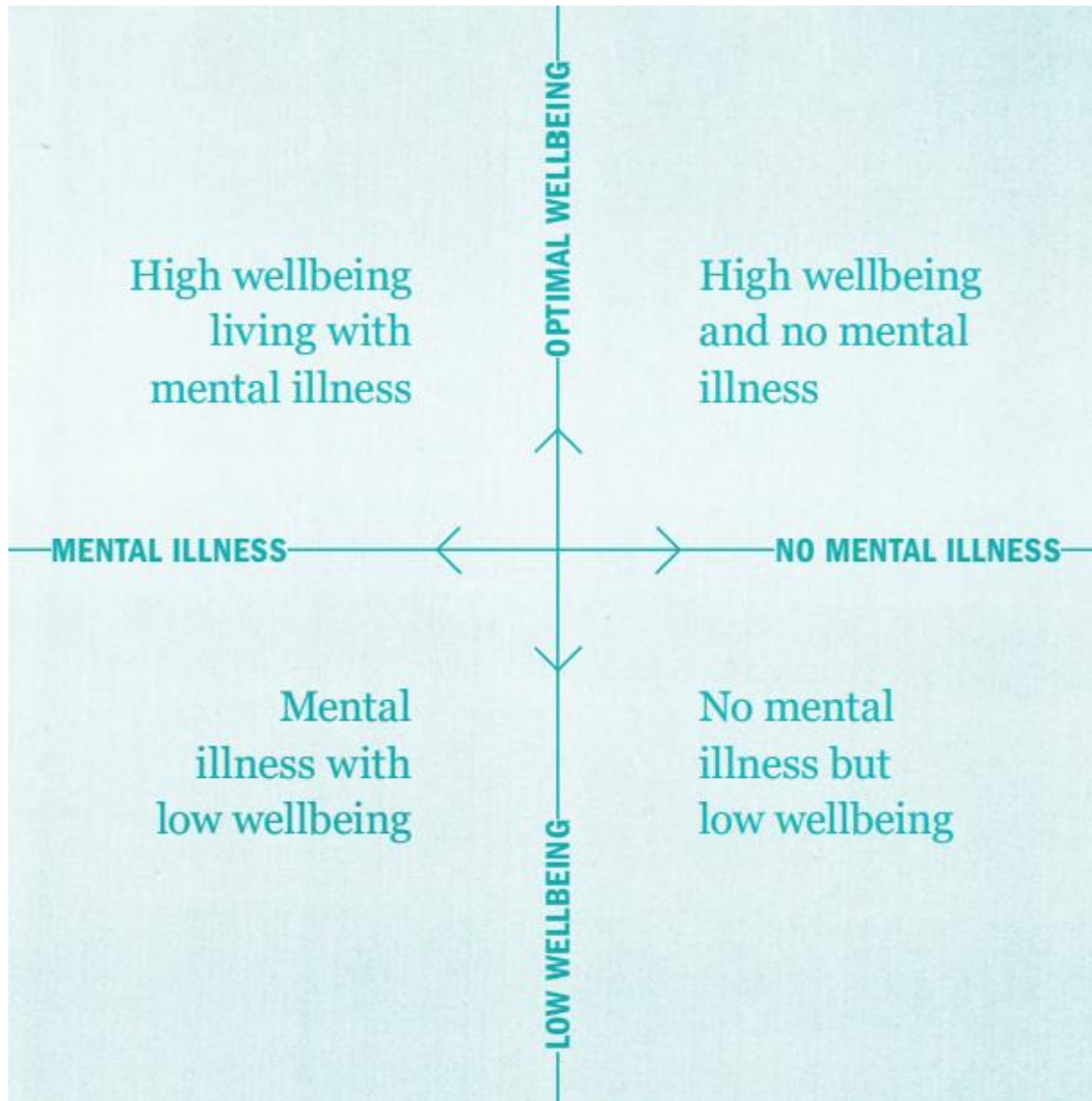Intellectual – mental challenge, critical thinking, commitment to learn, curiosity

Physical – body, exercise, nutrition, healthy habits

Social – relationships, interaction, conflict-management, respect

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Embedding Holistic Wellbeing into the Fabric of the University – The SMU Resilience Framework

The diagram shows two axes forming four quadrants:

- Vertical axis: OPTIMAL WELLBEING (top) to LOW WELLBEING (bottom)
- Horizontal axis: MENTAL ILLNESS (left) to NO MENTAL ILLNESS (right)

Quadrants:
- High wellbeing living with mental illness (top left)
- High wellbeing and no mental illness (top right)
- Mental illness with low wellbeing (bottom left)
- No mental illness but low wellbeing (bottom right)

- Discussions on mental health tend to focus on those experiencing mental illness who need care or support. Universities have a responsibility towards those students and staff as well as to identify those at risk and intervene early

- But we also have the responsibility to promote good mental health for the whole university population

Tiered Care Model of Wellbeing Support

	Tier 1 Mental Well-being Promotion	Tier 2 Low Intensity Services	Tier 3 Moderate Intensity Services	Tier 4 High Intensity Services
Who will benefit?	Healthy individuals (i.e., coping well, no or minimal symptoms of mental health conditions)	Individuals with low mental health needs (e.g., some difficulties coping, mild symptoms of mental health conditions)	Individuals with moderate mental health needs (e.g., difficulties coping, moderate symptoms of mental health conditions)	Individuals with high mental health needs (e.g., major difficulties coping, showing severe symptoms of mental health conditions)
Objective	Promote and maintain mental well-being for all individuals, and prevent development of mental health conditions	Facilitate coping and prevent the escalation of symptoms	Reduce the severity of symptoms	Stabilise chronic mental health conditions
Examples of interventions/ resources provided	• School curriculum to build mental well-being and resilience • Public education and self-help (e.g. MindSG, SG Mental Well-Being Network) • Parenting/ Peer/ Community support • Workplace mental well-being support	• Mental health needs detection • Counselling • Stress and anxiety management, social skills training, behaviour management	• Mental health assessment • Psychotherapy (e.g. Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) • Medical treatment	• Psychiatric assessment and diagnosis • Specialised and longer-term psychological interventions • Medical treatment • Emergency services

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Operationalisation of the Resilience Framework

EDUCATION:
Equipping Students with Knowledge and Skills

✓ Online modules and resources:

- "Mental Health and You" (mandatory e-module)

- Online module for faculty & staff: Provide a baseline mental health literacy for all faculty and staff members (e.g. identification of early warning signs, skills to provide appropriate support and referral)

- SMU Resilience Framework micro-site

✓ Workshops

✓ Self-help App (Resilience@SMU)

- Social engagement activities, tools and educational content to empower students build positive habits and resilience

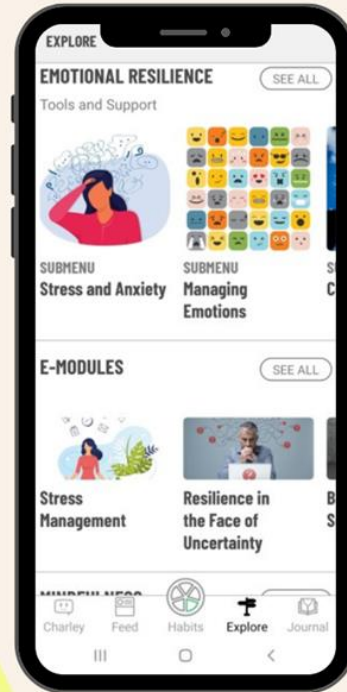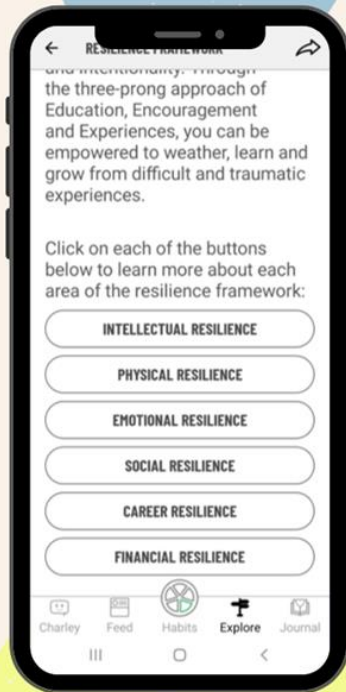Meet Charley, your personal digital wellness coach.

Quickly track the healthy habits you are working on each day.

Learn how to reduce and manage stress and anxiety.

Strengthening the Operationalisation of the Resilience Framework

ENCOURAGEMENT:
Providing students with professional and peer support

✓ Counselling services

✓ Peer Wellbeing Network (comprising Peer Helpers, Voices Student Advocates, Student Council of Discipline & SMU Purple)

✓ Student Care Officers

   - Proactively outreach to the student community, serve as signposts to guide students who need support services & provide early intervention

✓ Career Coaches

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Student Care & Support Services

Helping students navigate university life and the university environment

Referring them to support services, on or off campus

Lending a listening ear and providing encouragement

Note of thanks from a student

From: Kelli HOE Min Qin
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 12:25 AM
To: SMU Student Care studentcare@smu.edu.sg
Subject: **Thank you for the chat**

Hello SCO,

I'm Kelli, a Year 3 student and I've met 2 of the SCOs this afternoon at SOB [School of Business] but I've forgotten their names. Nevertheless, I would like to thank them for approaching and chatting with me, together with the gifts. I really appreciate it and I think this is such a nice initiative, which helps to build a more caring and supportive environment and also allows more people to reach out.

On a side note, thank you for the emails every week, they are great reminders too!

Have a great week ahead and take care!

Best regards,
Kelli

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Student Care & Support Services

Exam Angels Programme

Strengthening the Operationalisation of the Resilience Framework

EXPERIENCES:
Providing students with authentic learning environments

✓ Mandatory internships (minimum 10 weeks)

✓ Mandatory community service (minimum 80 hours)

✓ Mandatory Global Exposure

✓ Diverse co-curricular offerings: student organisations, University events

These real-world experiences broaden students' emotional and psychological horizons

Strengthening the Operationalisation of the Resilience Framework

Towards an Evidence-Based Approach

Student Pulse Survey

- A regular survey to keep abreast of student sentiments and to be able to react more quickly to concerns that arise. This survey will provide relevant data to inform the University's operationalisation of the Resilience Framework, enabling an evidence-based approach to be adopted in designing intervention measures.

- Questions in the pulse survey will be determined by the needs of the season

- Longitudinal tracking of students' holistic wellbeing and resilience over time using:

    - a validated 7-item index that measures Resilience

    - the Flourishing Measure (from the Harvard Human Flourishing Program)

Engendering pathways to a life of flourishing

Thank you