



A group shot at OUR S.A.Y. Conference 2019.

Mind matters of the young

➤ IMU's first public conference addressing mental health of youth today

THE International Medical University (IMU) hosted its first public conference focusing on society, adults and youth. The OUR S.A.Y. (Society, Adults, Youth) Conference 2019, organised by IMU's Department of Psychology, IMU Psychology Club, and IMU Community

Engagement also known as IMU Cares, was carried out in partnership with the Dignity for Children Foundation.

By and large, the event was said to be the answer to the call of the nation in addressing the mental health of our youth. Themed "Youths' Mental Well-being: Dare to Be Aware", the conference raised four major issues faced by today's youth - depression and anxiety; cyber-bullying and bullying; substance abuse and addiction; and healthy relationships and harm reduction.

Officiating the opening of the conference was IMU vice-chancellor Prof. Abdul Aziz Baba, who said in his opening speech, that the

four main issues addressed by OUR S.A.Y. are contemporary issues. "It is important to understand the risk factors, mental distress and the efforts that can be taken to mitigate mental health," he advised.

The sound of a gong and recital of a poem by a student from the Dignity for Children Foundation marked the opening of the conference, followed by plenary sessions involving parents, teachers and counsellors, discussing the four "pillars".

Among the experts and trained professionals who delivered talks were counsellor, thanatologist and certified Reality Therapy trainer Dr. Anasuya Jegathisan; addiction therapist Chris Sekar; clinical psychologist Dr. Chua Sook Ning; and medical graduate and sexual and reproductive health activist Dr. Rabiathul Badariah. Workshops and forums plus engaging healthy debate and exchange of views and knowledge were eye-opening.

The event was deemed fruitful as it forged ties and fostered a feeling of oneness among those present, together addressing the mental health concerns of our youth. Overall, multiple perspectives were shared and insights identified, arriving at greater understanding and better solutions to combat the rising mental health issues of the young. Head of welfare and mental health of the Foundation Vivian Ng and chairperson of the event Dhanya Dhanarajah presented their respective closing addresses before the end of the conference.



From right: Abdul Aziz, IMU student and IMU Psychology Club secretary Darvin Anandaraja, IMU 2nd-year psychology student Amutha Aruvi Kaniamuthan, Ng, Psychology Department acting head Dr. Shamala Ramasamy and IMU Community Engagement director Prof. Khoo Suan Phaik.