

I'm Steady Lah project of Duke-NUS
medical students now in its second year

Working to remove stigma of mental illness

✔ **ADELINETAN**

He was having a cup of coffee with a secondary school friend last year when the friend told him he had been suffering from depression.

Mr Clement Sim was surprised that his friend had had depression for about a decade and he never suspected anything.

Mr Sim, 29, now in his third year studying medicine at the Duke-NUS Medical School, said: "He was always cheerful and bubbly, and it really pained me to know that he was suffering in silence for the past 10 years."

Upon learning he was studying psychiatry, two more of Mr Sim's friends came forward to tell him that they were suffering from depression.

This prompted Mr Sim to start I'm Steady Lah, a student-organised community service project that aims to remove the stigma associated with mental health disorders.

Together with six of his schoolmates, Mr Sim started the project in June last year and held its first event last October.

Mr Sim said: "After my friends spoke to me, it really got me thinking, 'How many more people around me could be suffering from depression?'"

The project aims to raise awareness of channels where young people with depression can seek help, such as through the free psychiatric assessment for the youth provided by the Community Health Assessment Team.

There will also be forum sessions for the public where they can learn about the scientific side of depression and anxiety and interact with patients suffering from depression during a panel discussion, where they can participate anonymously.

The project, in its second year, is funded by Duke-NUS and a grant from the National Youth Council.

Mr Sim hopes the project can help young working adults with depression, as they are the least likely to get help for fear that it will be dismissed by their parents, or affect their career.

He also added that if mental health disorders go undetected, it could result in suicide attempts or reckless behaviour that could affect other people.

Mr Sim hopes to make the project an annual event.

He said: "I want people to know that mental health is as important as physical health and that it is fine to seek help for it."



Mr Clement Sim. PHOTO:
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