

Clarity Singapore's BRAVE Festival 2020 Ends on a High Note

BRAVE – Catholic Youth Mental Health Festival 2020 that ended recently had a unique atmosphere. Given the pandemic, the festival was held online, but still showed the enthusiasm of the participants to be part of it.

Mental health is important to us all, but in Singapore, open discussions about mental health issues are still somewhat stigmatised in society. Tackling this head-on, Clarity Singapore, together with Caritas Singapore, believed it was time to hold a mental health festival for youth as a platform for them to have open conversations about mental health.

Held to coincide with Clarity Singapore's 10th anniversary, the festival examined how mental health literacy, psychological interventions and faith relate to the mental health of young people. It featured speakers from various background – mental health practitioners, peer support specialists and religious priests and sisters.

The speakers touched on issues such as mental health landscape in Singapore, suicidality, anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder and recovery journey, as well as the role of faith in mental health recovery. They shared their expertise and experiences through interactive sessions, discussions and personal stories of lived experiences to encourage actions towards one's mental well-being.

Says a participant, "BRAVE festival has opened my eyes to the invisible nature and often stigmatising mark of mental health challenges. It also highlighted to me the struggles of those experiencing mental health challenges." She adds, "All workshops brought a ray of hope. This festival has helped me to use some of the self-care techniques to manage my emotions. More importantly, I am convinced that it would be meaningful for me to walk in solidarity with them."

