

MEDIA RELEASE

JARDINES' MINDSET CHARITY AND TOUCH COMMUNITY SERVICES LAUNCH NEW INTERVENTION PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT PATHOLOGICAL GAMERS' MENTAL HEALTH

- Raise awareness of gaming addiction as a mental health condition
- S\$1.6 million support from MINDSET to fund programme focused on youths-at-risk

SINGAPORE, 27 August 2019 – MINDSET Care Limited (“**MINDSET**” or “思健”), the registered charity of the Jardine Matheson Group (“**Jardines**” or “怡和”), in collaboration with TOUCH Community Services (“**TOUCH**” or “触爱社会服务”) have launched a new intervention programme – ‘**DigitalMINDSET**’, targeted at managing pathological gamers’ addictive behaviour, while keeping their mental health in check.

With the World Health Organisation’s inclusion of ‘gaming disorder’ as a mental health condition¹, MINDSET and TOUCH hope to draw attention to this issue that is growing in prevalence amongst the youths in Singapore today. Last year, TOUCH saw 90 cases related to excessive gaming and device use, nearly a three-fold increase since 2015. This calls for more efforts to help address this growing concern, and a timely introduction of ‘DigitalMINDSET’ to support an underserved segment that has low levels of awareness as a mental health condition.

Commenting on the new intervention programme, **Mr Alex Newbigging** (艾力·纽壁坚), MINDSET’s Chairman said, “Jardines’ support for mental health extends beyond rehabilitation. We also believe in the importance of going upstream so that we can contribute to early intervention. Being able to raise awareness for gaming disorder as a mental health condition and provide youths the support to help them get back on track before they transition to adulthood, is meaningful to us. We are glad to partner TOUCH to set up ‘DigitalMINDSET’.”

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-diseases/gaming-addiction-classified-as-mental-health-disorder-by-who-idUSKBN1JE0VI>

Said **Mr James Tan** (陈锦耀), Chief Executive Officer, TOUCH Community Services, “As the digital landscape and user habits evolve, we can no longer focus only on online or gaming behaviour, but need to expand our attention to also address the mental and psychological impact of excessive cyber usage on our youths. The announcement by the World Health Organisation recognising gaming disorder as a mental health condition further emphasises the severity of pathological gaming and its effects on one’s mental health. This is why we have developed an intervention programme like ‘DigitalMINDSET’.”

Intervention through DigitalMINDSET

Conducted by TOUCH Youth Intervention (“TYI” or “触爱青年转越”) and funded by MINDSET through a S\$1.6 million support over five years, DigitalMINDSET is a nine-month programme for youths aged 12-21 who have developed mental health issues from excessive gaming and device use. As a result of their gaming addiction, many of these youths have difficulty coping with or controlling their emotions and mental conditions.

The programme’s holistic approach not only comprises one-to-one and family counselling sessions, but also group therapy sessions that include activities such as behavioural and personality profiling. Such activities incorporate experiential learning and facilitate meaningful conversations, allowing youths to gain insights on their current situation and behavioural tendencies.

Apart from funding, MINDSET is also actively involved in the programme Jardine Ambassadors, who are volunteers from different Jardine companies. They will be offering additional support and mentorship to the youths participating in the intervention programmes. Besides being the youths’ role models, they also provide career guidance through discussions and learning journeys to Jardine companies for the youths to gain insights into various job possibilities. With proper coaching, the youths could look beyond gaming and start making plans for their career aspirations.

Since the commencement of DigitalMINDSET on 1 August 2019, 20 youths had been enrolled in the programme through referrals by their secondary schools or parents. Further to their one-to-one meetings with counsellors, they will start attending group therapy sessions by end August while their learning journeys to Jardine business units will commence in October.

Addressing Emotion Regulation

From TYI's engagement with youths, its counsellors have observed that the majority of youths engaged in excessive internet usage were unable to adequately manage their emotions. TYI's observations are corroborated by research which reported that excessive internet usage is associated with poor mental health² and concerns such as depression and anxiety.

Ryan (not his real name) is a 14-year-old who had stopped going to school so that he could spend time gaming and watching videos online at home. When his parents confiscated his electronic devices and his negotiations for play time failed, he was enraged. Consumed by anger, he turned violent and repeatedly punched his father. Ryan was referred to TYI where he learnt how to manage his device use and better regulate his emotions through counselling and therapy sessions.

When youths are referred to TYI by schools or concerned parents, some of them may display symptoms of anxiety, depression or uncontrolled anger like Ryan did. If left unaddressed, the inability to regulate emotions may lead to negative effects on the youths' mental health and compromise their ability to deal with challenges in life – an issue which would continue to negatively impact them even in adulthood.

For more information on DigitalMINDSET, schools and parents can contact TYI at youth.intervention@touch.org.sg or via its counselling helpline – TOUCHline 1800 377 2252.

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² Ciarrochi J., Parker P., Sahdra B., Marshall S., Jackson C., Gloster AT., Heaven P. (2015). The Development of Compulsive Internet Use and Mental Health: A Four-Year Study of Adolescence

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ABOUT MINDSET CARE LIMITED

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MINDSET Care Limited (MINDSET) is a registered charity established by the Jardine Matheson Group of companies to make a tangible difference in the area of mental health. Led by Jardine Ambassadors, MINDSET aims to raise awareness and understanding of mental health issues to change attitudes, while at the same time, provide practical support to individuals, families and charitable initiatives in the mental health sector. MINDSET was awarded the Charity Governance Award 2018 and Charity Transparency Awards 2016, 2017 and 2018 by the Charity Council. MINDSET is also named a Champion of Good by the National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre.

The Jardine Matheson Group companies in Singapore are: Jardine Matheson (Singapore), Jardine Cycle & Carriage; Cycle & Carriage Singapore, Jardine Engineering Corporation; JOS; Innovix Distribution; Schindler Lifts (Singapore); Gammon Construction; Hongkong Land; MCL Land; Mandarin Oriental, Singapore; Dairy Farm Singapore (Cold Storage; Giant; Guardian Health & Beauty; and 7-Eleven); Maxim's Catering Limited, a company incorporated in Hong Kong; Genki Sushi Singapore; and Starbucks Singapore.

ABOUT TOUCH COMMUNITY SERVICES

Since 1992, TOUCH Community Services has served people of all ages, races and religions to see sustainable change and transformation in their lives. It believes in the worth and potential of every child, youth at-risk, family in need, senior and person with special or healthcare needs to grow, participate and contribute in the community. The heartbeat of TOUCH is to **activate potential, build independence, connect people** for mutual support, and **deliver impact** by developing sustainable solutions in society. For more information on TOUCH, please visit www.touch.org.sg.

ABOUT TOUCH YOUTH INTERVENTION

TOUCH Youth Intervention (TYI) was set up in 2017 to better meet the range of challenging issues facing today's youths. TYI specialises in counselling and programmes for at-risk youths supported by the Ministry of Social and Family Development. Its areas of focus are on cyber wellness, mental health and youth issues.

TOUCHline

Through its counselling helpline - TOUCHline 1800 377 2252 - TYI seeks to empower youths to be more effective in managing a range of youth-related issues. This helpline is available from Mondays to Fridays, 9am to 6pm.