

## Malaysian Mental Health Association and IBM Team Up to Engage At-Risk Youth IBM's Impact Grant Program to provide social media strategy to de-stigmatize mental health

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia, April 19, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE:[IBM](#)) is providing the Malaysian Mental Health Association (MMHA) with a grant of the company's time and talent to develop a strategy for using social media to engage at-risk youth suffering from mental health issues.

This project underscored the recent findings of the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2015 by Malaysia's Ministry of Health that showed 29.2% of Malaysians aged 16-years-old and above (4.2 million out of 14.4 million) are suffering from mental health problems. The survey found that highest prevalence was recorded among 16 to 19 years old. The project is also timely, as the theme for this year's World Health Day is "Depression, Let's Talk."

Applying its social media know-how, IBM will work with MMHA to develop social media strategies to harness the potential of the digital world as a powerful tool for change. The strategies will be aimed at enhancing public awareness on mental health and its related issues, by enabling an alternative method to approaching individuals with worrisome symptoms or providing information to those looking for help. This effort is part of IBM's Impact Grant program – a pro bono initiative that provides consulting expertise and technologies such as cognitive, mobile and social to support non-profit organizations in serving society more effectively.

"In teaming up with IBM for this project, MMHA will be able to use social media and the digital environment in an innovative way in managing mental health issues," said MMHA president Mr. See Cheng Siang. "The aim of the social media approach is to enable MMHA to disarm mental health stigmas, raise awareness on correct health information from reputable sources and aggregate conversations and connections, especially between young people, with others who are experiencing similar challenges."

The project builds on a grant the MMHA received in 2016 to utilize IBM Social Media Analytics - a powerful monitoring tool that captures and consolidates insights from social media to analyze the opinions, interactions and conversation patterns expressed on Facebook, Twitter, online communities, forums and blogs to survey public perception surrounding mental health issues.

This analysis uncovered the potential of social media in de-stigmatizing mental health and consequently, encourage those with questions or symptoms to reach out for help. The findings spurred MMHA to strengthen its social media platform as a means to engage and share critical information on mental health with people who may not be inclined to openly seek help.

"At IBM, we aim to make a sustainable impact in our communities and we find this possible for the critical area of mental health by continuing to contribute our talent and expertise to enable MMHA to increase its social media engagement," said IBM Malaysia managing director Ms. Chong Chye Neo. "With this grant, we would have committed the equivalent of \$33,000 in technology and expertise as part of our commitment to make an impact in the proactive management of this health issue. The outcome will enable MMHA to better understand the social media behaviours of youth at risk and effectively increase engagement outreach."

As part of the Social Media Strategy & Planning Impact Grant for MMHA, IBM will use design thinking to visualize new approaches to social media campaigns related to mental health as well as formulate social media strategies that will be effective in engaging on mental health issues. Following this, IBM will employ expertise within its social media practice to create an actionable roadmap to improve MMHA's engagement on social media. The roadmap will be implemented jointly in this first year by MMHA and IBM employee volunteers.

MMHA is a non-profit organization represented at the Mental Health Promotion Advisory Council to the Minister of Health.

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