

The background features a light cream color with decorative elements. On the right side, there are wavy, golden lines that sweep across the page. Scattered throughout are numerous small, golden dots, some of which form faint, larger-scale wave patterns. The overall aesthetic is clean, professional, and celebratory.

Outstanding *Social Work* Awards 2026

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Outstanding *Social Work* Awards 2026

Practice

Pioneering Hidden Youth Work

Fei Yue
Community Services

Yeo Sen Son Benjamin
Senior Assistant Director, Lead Social Worker

Gan Li Shan Gayle
Assistant Senior Social Worker

Tee Wan Ting Zoe
Deputy Head of Department, Senior Social Worker

Rauf Malachi Redza Fauzi
Assistant Senior Social Worker

Recognising the emerging issue of youth social withdrawal early, the team from Fei Yue Community Services (FYCS) — comprising Yeo Sen Son Benjamin, Zoe Tee, Gayle Gan and Rauf Malachi Redza Fauzi — pioneered dedicated innovative outreach and intervention programmes tailored to hidden youth (HY) in Singapore. Their work established the sector’s first specialised outreach service for engaging socially withdrawn youth, laying the groundwork for subsequent social service responses in this area. The team adopts a whole-of-society social work approach that integrates remedial, preventive and advocacy strategies to address this phenomenon.

As part of its remedial services, the team provides direct case management and caregiver support, currently serving 100 hidden youth in Singapore. Sustained outreach and engagement efforts have achieved a significant milestone, with over 70% of socially hidden youth being successfully engaged by social workers. The HY work has also evolved into a multidisciplinary model that includes parent support groups and an Animal Assisted Intervention team, enabling more holistic responses to the complex socio-emotional needs of hidden youth and their families. Partnerships with community stakeholders, including CapitaLand Hope Foundation and Mandai Wildlife Group, further extend engagement through vocational exposure opportunities that support socio-emotional development and pathways towards reintegration.

To lower barriers to help-seeking as part of its preventive services, the team developed ReConnect, an anonymous online counselling platform that currently supports 40 youth and serves as a safe and accessible first touchpoint for those not ready for in-person support.

Beyond direct service, the team advances advocacy and sector development to strengthen awareness and professional capability in addressing hidden youth issues. They conceptualised the International Youth Outreach Conference 2024, convening practitioners and stakeholders to deepen knowledge and practice in engaging socially withdrawn youth. The team also engaged media and community partners — including CNA Insider, Channel 8 Tuesday Report and seven other major media platforms — to broaden public understanding and empower clients as advocates. In addition, FYCS is the first agency in Singapore to publish research on hidden youth in *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, contributing local evidence to the academic field. The team also provides training to strengthen professional knowledge and sector practice in managing hidden youth. Lastly, in pioneering this cause, the team works towards brokering for resources with private funders such as Chick-fil-A, who are like-minded in serving the youth.

As hidden youth often remain unseen by conventional support systems and the issue continues to evolve, FYCS' work remains ongoing and is expanding in reach and capability, strengthening Singapore's capacity to identify, engage and support socially withdrawn youth and their families. This is underpinned by the team's integrated micro- and macro-level approach, which has laid a sustainable foundation for continued impact in addressing youth social withdrawal.



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Practice

Re²Ignite

Ren Ci Hospital

Nur Sahara Binte Kamsani
Senior Medical Social Worker

Louisa Bielig
Medical Social Worker

Siti Aisyah Binte Ismail
Medical Social Worker

Re²Ignite is an interdisciplinary psychosocial innovation developed by Ren Ci Hospital to enhance the bio-psychosocial-spiritual wellbeing of Persons Living with Dementia (PLWD) and their care partners. Led by medical social workers Nur Sahara Binte Kamsani, Siti Aisyah Binte Ismail, and Louisa Bielig, the programme is grounded in the Spark of Life philosophy and delivers person-centred, strengths-based and emotionally nurturing interventions that reconnect PLWD with identity, relationships and purpose, while addressing sector gaps arising from fragmented dementia care and the limited inclusion of caregivers.

Moving beyond conventional activity-based models, Re²Ignite adopts a holistic and structured Social Prescription Model that brings together psychosocial, sensory and creative interventions across the dementia care continuum. The programme offers a suite of stage-appropriate interventions, including the Spark of Life Rehabilitative Club Programme for advanced dementia, Art Therapy: Creating Memories for moderate dementia, OASIS 2R for early- to mid-stage reminiscence and reintegration, and Loving Touch, inspired by Namaste Care, for advanced or end-of-life stages.

Since its inception, Re²Ignite has supported 238 persons living with dementia, 95 caregivers and 247 care staff. Programme outcomes reflect an average 12% improvement in wellbeing scores and a 98% caregiver satisfaction rate, with participants demonstrating sustained improvements in emotional regulation, mood stability, social responsiveness, sense of purpose and functional participation.

Group-based sessions reduced isolation and fostered peer bonding, while structured community outings promoted confidence, real-world engagement and social inclusion beyond institutional settings.

These outcomes were further strengthened by Re²Ignite's emphasis on family partnership and interdisciplinary collaboration. Caregivers rediscovered meaningful connections with their loved ones through joint outings, psychoeducation sessions and closure rituals, including bedside and memorial services. Six programme graduation ceremonies — jointly led by social workers, art and music therapists, and nurses — brought together more than 120 staff and family members, serving as both celebratory and learning platforms where caregiving knowledge, relational practices and psychosocial insights were shared across professional and family systems.

Underpinning Re²Ignite is a scalable and sustainable workforce development model that ensures continuity and expansion of the programme. To date, 24 staff have been trained and certified as Spark of Life Facilitators, supported by ongoing capability-building through staff training and the interdisciplinary BE PRESENT dementia communication series, which has reached nearly 250 staff. Successfully implemented across four Ren Ci facilities, Re²Ignite has been recognised as a Best Team Finalist at the Singapore Health Quality Service Awards 2025, and its practice leadership has been shared locally and internationally at the 8th Singapore Palliative Care Conference 2023 and the 36th Alzheimer's Disease International Global Conference 2024. Re²Ignite stands as a sustainable and replicable model that meaningfully advances sector-wide standards of dementia care.



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Practice

Youth COP

**SHINE Children and
Youth Services**

Tan Hock Chiang Jason
Head of Youth COP

Tan Yee Ying
Senior Social Worker

Youth COP is an award-winning social work programme designed by SHINE Children and Youth Services for youth crime-prevention through leadership and positive youth development in Singapore. Led by Tan Hock Chiang Jason and Tan Yee Ying, the programme provides early engagement to enable each youth to navigate challenges and vulnerabilities, while strengthening positive decision-making, pro-social behaviour and engagement with school and community. It helps them thrive and maximise their potential, empowering them to be active ambassadors against crime among all youth.

Youth COP adopts a systemic and strengths-based approach grounded in sound theoretical frameworks, intentionally shifting away from deficit-based labelling and instead empowering youths to build positive identities as contributors within their homes, schools and communities. Social workers in the programme orchestrate a tri-partite partnership between the social service agency, schools and the Singapore Police Force, synergising on the strengths of each partner to reduce risks of delinquency among youth and communities, develop youths as crime-prevention leaders in their schools and neighbourhoods, strengthen pro-social behaviour and commitment to Singapore laws, and empower youths to become active agents of change among their peers.

Through the Youth COP programme, more than 1,600 youths have developed positively as crime-prevention ambassadors. Many had previously encountered challenging social influences or environments, but had developed clear and positive identities as leaders and contributors. Over the past five years, 100% of youths in the programme remained positively engaged in school and completed

secondary education, with up to 98% staying away from offences while in the programme. More than 80% of youths have achieved one or more outcomes, including improved socio-emotional resilience, increased pro-social behaviour, and strengthened relationships with peers, schools, family and significant adults.

What began in 2007 as a pilot collaboration between SHINE, one school and one Neighbourhood Police Centre (NPC) has since expanded to six schools and six NPCs, with further expansion planned. In 2022, Youth COP launched the Youth COP Alumni Programme, with close to 80 graduates returning as Alumni Leaders — reflecting a significant shift in youths’ self-perception and identity as contributors and leaders, while building a sustainable ecosystem of youth volunteers who support programme delivery.

In 2025, Youth COP further strengthened its sustainability through the launch of its Social Impact Guarantee (SIG), an “invest for impact” funding model — only the second of its kind implemented in Singapore and globally — positioning the programme for continued scale and long-term impact. Youth COP has demonstrated exceptional sector leadership in youth crime prevention by stakeholders with the knowledge, skills and frameworks to engage youths more effectively and sustainably.



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Practice Research

*“Building Pathways to Potential”:
Uncovering What Works*

Care Corner Singapore

Wong Li Jin Michelle
Principal Social Worker

MindBlown was conceptualised in 2019 by a dedicated team of social workers at Care Corner Singapore, led by Wong Li Jin Michelle. As a four-year programme, MindBlown supported adolescents from lower socio-economic backgrounds through their secondary school years by offering targeted intervention that strengthens executive function skills. The programme harnesses a supportive learning community and formal systems of learning, partnering with parents and educators to create conditions that unlock adolescents’ potential. Grounded in recommendations from a 2018 programme review and needs assessment of the youth services landscape, MindBlown comprised both evaluation and practice research to understand programme effects and identify components that can be replicated for future adolescent development work.

The research advanced social work knowledge in four key areas. First, it generated local evidence affirming adolescence as a second developmental window, demonstrating that timely and developmentally attuned support can meaningfully shape developmental trajectories. Second, the study identified five mutually reinforcing conditions, i.e., “Gears” that drive adolescent engagement and learning – Relevant, Useful, Stimulating, Room for Experimenting and a Supportive Environment anchored in the 4S (Safe, Seen, Soothed, Secure). This Five Gears framework offers a replicable, evidence-based model for understanding adolescent motivation and learning. Third, this research also highlighted the central role of practitioners, underscoring the importance of a competent, consistent, emotionally attuned team and emotional safety in shaping outcomes. Finally, it provided insights into how strengthened life skills, within a supportive ecosystem, can buffer academic stress and improve academic resilience during adolescence.

Insights from the study have been actively translated into practice and have informed adolescent work within Care Corner Singapore and beyond, contributing to a growing evidence base that reinforces how social workers design, deliver and envision support for adolescents during this critical developmental period. Practitioner capability at Care Corner Singapore has been strengthened through onboarding, supervision and reflective practice using shared concepts such as the Five Gears and the 4S. Programme design and facilitation are now grounded in developmental science, autonomy-supportive environments and student-centered learning, with strong partnerships forged with parents and educators to support a more cohesive ecosystem of support around adolescents.

At the organisational and sector levels, the study has shaped Care Corner Singapore's strategic direction in adolescent work. It informed the decision to address developmental gaps earlier by expanding focus to early adolescence and the upper primary years, particularly for children from lower-income and ComLink+ families. These research-informed directions have driven service expansion, fostered cross-system partnerships, enhanced engagements with philanthropic partners and supported dissemination across sector platforms. Together, these contributions demonstrate the value of social work practice research in translating evidence into practice and strengthening how services, systems and communities support adolescents.



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Practice Research

“Leaving is just the start of ending the relationship”: Understanding women’s decision-making post-separation from abusive spouse

**Care Corner Singapore &
Singapore Institute of Technology**

Ng Yu Han Valencia
Assistant Head, Care Corner Singapore

Conducted in Singapore by Care Corner Singapore in collaboration with Associate Professor Ingrid Wilson from Singapore Institute of Technology, this practice research examined how women make decisions following separation from an abusive spouse, including the motivations, influences and contexts shaping these decisions, as well as women’s perceptions of the role of formal supports. The study was prompted by a lack of Singapore-based research on spousal violence at the post-separation stage. While international literature has extensively examined women’s decisions to leave abusive relationships, less is known about decision-making after separation, when post-separation abuse and coercive control may persist or escalate. During this period, women are navigating justice and legal systems, parenting with an abusive former spouse, and trauma recovery, often making decisions that appear at odds with expectations of support services.

The study mapped key factors influencing women’s decision-making across multiple post-separation processes, including enforcing protection orders, seeking divorce and custody, parenting post-separation, employment, housing and financial stability. It identified core concepts central to women during this phase, including feeling safe, finding closure, mothering, redefining marriage, reshaping identity and envisioning a future. The findings highlighted that leaving an abusive relationship marks the beginning of a complex decision-making pathway, often requiring women to make difficult trade-offs as they work to regain control of their lives.

The conceptual findings offer a detailed psycho-educational resource for family violence practitioners supporting women post-separation. By deepening understanding of women’s decision-making processes, the research strengthens

empathy, supports non-judgemental engagement, and enables caseworkers to plan and implement more responsive and customised intervention strategies aimed at building resilience over time. These insights are particularly valuable for practitioners working with women at the safety and survival stage of recovery, where the post-separation journey is often less well understood.

The research directly informed the development of a Practice Toolkit for use by caseworkers at Care Corner Project StART. The toolkit supports structured conversations that help women gain clarity on their next steps, enables deeper exploration of emotions, and provides a more systematic way to track decision-making milestones. It remains in active use in current practice and has strengthened intervention effectiveness when working with women experiencing post-separation intimate partner violence.

Beyond practice translation, the research has contributed to sector learning and advocacy. Findings were presented at the European Conference on Domestic Violence to an international audience, generating robust discussion on post-separation decision-making. The toolkit and practice learnings will be progressively shared with stakeholders across the family violence ecosystem, including the Family Court, police, social workers and protective services, to inform practice, influence policy and strengthen system-wide support for women who have separated from abusive spouses.



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