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HELP FAMILY SERVICE CENTRE



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Exclusive aims to provide readers with an insight into the needs of single-parent families and the different ways of integrating them into the society. Drop us an email at enquiry@helpfsc.org.sg or fax us at 6457 5343 if you have any suggestion or sharing.

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Divorce – Children's Perspective

- Mrs Saradha Ramachandran, Senior Counsellor/
Associate Consultant, HELP Family Service Centre

Divorce is a time of change from the stability that was established prior to the event. It affects both the adults and children. The effects of the divorce on children vary with the age, gender, personality, family relationships, the coping skills and so on. Parents need to understand the different effects and the differing needs of the children.

It is likely that the toddlers and preschoolers will be aware of the change that has taken place. They may notice the absence of a parent and ask questions regarding the absent parent. They may be scared and wonder whether the remaining parent would also leave them. They may also lose a sense of security.

When children are of the school going age, they may not only have to cope with the loss, shock, uncertainty but also with the guilt related to assuming responsibility for their parental divorce, worrying

about how their immediate needs would be met, worrying about the welfare of the parent and sometimes being caught between both the parents.

A teenager undergoes the process of developing his/her own identity, psychological well-being, peer group identity and personal value system. It provides the teenager an opportunity to broaden his/her own horizon and discover who he/she really is. It is the period whereby teenagers seek independence and autonomy. During this process, he/she may maintain varying degrees of closeness/distance from their parents. When teenagers go through their parental divorce, it uproots some of the basic assumptions about family and relationship. It could be a difficult period for the teenagers, having to cope with their parents' divorce as well as the challenges of adolescent years. During adolescence, they may

also have differences with one or both parents. Divorce can add to or complicate their developmental process.

With divorce, the children may experience a whole range of emotions such as shock, anger, sadness, fear, anxiety, guilt, confusion and apprehension. The children may also experience a loss of familiarity, stability, predictability and control. These experiences may lead the children to feel that this transition is too much for them to balance, while at the same time, it is very much needed to bring about the stability in their lives.

How to support children to deal with the impact of divorce?

- Tell children what divorce is and what it means at their age appropriateness.
- Tell children that parents do not 'divorce' children.
- Tell children that they are not to be blamed for the parents' divorce.
- Discuss changes in the family that are likely to take place as a result of the divorce.
- Allow children to talk about the divorce and the changes.

- Allow children to express their feelings.
- Help the children to manage their feelings in an effective and appropriate manner.
- Help children to acknowledge and deal with the dilemmas they may face due to the divorce in the family.
- It is important to identify and know how the children are affected by divorce.
- Be observant of the changes in their behaviour that could be indicative of what is happening within them and their feelings.
- Continue to build the relationship with the children by showing care and concern, giving them love, security and affirmation.

Rebuilding our lives after a divorce may appear to be an uphill task at the onset, but we may soon realize that the challenge is worthwhile as we learn and grow from it. As a parent, we need to take care of our self and make the necessary adjustments. It may be good to get our own acts together. This will then assist our children to make their adjustments to the parents' divorce more smoothly and amicably.

离婚对孩子的影响

离婚改变了一向来稳定的家庭生活。大人和小孩都会受影响。而受影响的程度取决于孩子的年龄、性别、个性、与家人之间的关系和适应能力等等。父母必须理解离婚对孩子的影响以及他们的个别需要。

幼儿和学前的小孩都有可能察觉到家里起了变化。他们会追问为何不见爸爸或妈妈。同时也深怕双亲都会离他们而去。这些担忧使他们丧失信心，对所拥有的失去安全感。

对求学的孩童来说，他们在面对失去亲人的伤痛和震惊而彷徨的同时，也往往会把父母的离异归咎自己。他们也会担心生活失去依靠，并替父母的处境感到担忧。有时，他们还成了离婚双方争取的对象。

青少年在成长的过程中，他们的生理、心理、群体和人生价值观都在起变化。他们一面开始认识自己，一面寻求独立自主，与父母的距离变得时远时近、拿捏不定。父母这时候闹婚变会严重动摇孩子对家庭和谐与人际关系的信心，对他们更是双重打击。如果平时亲子关系紧张，离婚更是雪上加霜。

离婚会给孩子带来种种情绪的冲击，如震惊、愤怒、悲伤、害怕、焦急、自责、恍惚和忧虑。他们因此体验到将失去了熟悉、稳定、可靠的生活环境，也失去了自己能控制的环境。这些经历一再地抨击着孩子们赖以健康成长的安定生活。

如何扶持孩子适应父母离婚后的生活

- 用孩子的语言让他们理解离婚这件事。
- 让孩子明白父母不会离弃他们。
- 告诉孩子父母离婚不是他们的过错。
- 与孩子谈谈父母离婚后家里可能产生的变化。
- 让孩子有机会抒发他们对离婚的情绪、以及他们对生活改变的冲击、情感波动的感受和想法。
- 帮助孩子有效地、恰当地控制自己的情绪。
- 让孩子理解父母离婚以后的困境，并协助他们如何去面对它。
- 父母得理解离婚对自己孩子的影响。
- 父母得注意孩子行为上的改变，因为他们内心的挣扎和感受都会体现在行为上。
- 用关怀和爱心鼓励孩子，不断培育亲子关系。

离婚后，开始新生活虽然困难重重，但是它却让我们从生活的磨练中，变得坚强、勇敢，并活出自我，值！单亲父母不但要好好照顾自己，而且也要适时应变。父母一旦稳住阵脚，孩子们就能迅速有效地适应离婚后的生活。



Life is

By Mohammed Aqil Iman

Life, it has its ups and downs, but it still needs to move on....

This story is about my life and how I persevere in my life.

I was born into this beautiful world in 1996. I stayed with my parents, two older brothers and a younger sister.

Life was wonderful until about my kindergarten days. My father stopped working and my mum quarrelled with him as we were short of money. I remember that

many times my mum fetched me from school, and once we reached home, she would nag at my father.

When I was in Primary 1, my father was still the same. He did not work and depended on my mum to give him money. My mum was also the same and she would nag everyday. My brothers were always out with friends. Sometimes after school, I would stay back in school, and not do anything. I could not concentrate on my studies and my grades started to drop. I was worried for my younger sister, I was afraid that she would go down the wrong path.

When I was in Primary 2, my mum started to work. My second brother took charge of things at home. Every time I came back from school, I would find him sleeping in the hall and not cleaning the messy house. When he woke up, he would ask me to clean the house, and if I did not do it properly, he would shout at me. There were times that I complained to my mum after she got back from work, she would scold my brother and he would deny his actions. I remember that once my brother slapped me so hard that my cheek turned red. I could not do anything. Only when my mum asked him about the incident, then he revealed about he being bullied in school.

When I was in Primary 4, my mum wanted to divorce my father. My father did not want to sign the divorce paper. They had no choice but to go to court. My school results were affected and I failed in some subjects. Later when I was transferred to another school, things got better. There were quite a lot of friendly people and I could share my problems with them. I felt more confident sharing my problems with teachers or counsellors.

When I was in Primary 6, I got to know my parents better. My eldest brother finished his NS. My second brother also went through NS, and he became a better person in term of his attitude. My sister seemed comfortable with our lifestyle. I got closer to my mum. My studies improved.

I am glad that we have HELP Family Service Centre to accompany my family through our tough times by giving us financial help and organising programmes to help us improve ourselves. I also learnt not to give up easily and how to help others not to give up.

So now, I would like to share with you 'Never Give Up'. These three words will help you in life especially when you are feeling down.





Caring Heart

It seems that you are going through a difficult time at this moment trying to juggle with the adjustment to the changes at home and the demands of the increasing school work.

How do you feel about the changes at home and challenges at school?

I am just wondering if these challenges are causing stress in you.

Stress is a natural and normal part of our life. The process of growing up carries with it a bit of stress.

And it is therefore important for us to learn skills that will help us to cope effectively with our stress.

First, maybe you would like to talk to your dad about the difficulties you are facing with the pressure to finish your school work and making time to go to your mum's place.

Express to him your dilemma about the struggles you have of not going to your mum and your concern of the implication it may have on him.

On the other hand, you may also want to explain to your mum that there are some weekends that you may have difficulties coming over to her place and help her to understand the immense workload and stress you have been facing in your school work and your concern of your school performance so that your mum could also be there to give you support and be your listening ear in times of stress.

You may want to talk to your mum about your feelings towards her absence and tell her how much

I am 11 yrs old this year. My parents divorced 2 yrs ago. I stay with my dad and see my mum on Saturdays and Sundays only. However, sometimes I really do not want to go with my mum on weekends. She hardly spends time with me as she needs to work. Sometimes, I have lots of homework and projects and I ask my dad if I can stay home over the weekends to complete them. Then my dad would say that I would get him into trouble if I did not spend time with my mum. I love my mum and dad, and would like to do things together with them, but I really have homework to do and do not want to get my dad into trouble. What else can I do?

you value the time she spends with you. Alternatively, you may want to consider bringing your school work with you to your mum's place if she has to work on that day. Then you would not feel you are wasting your time there waiting for her to come back home.

You may also want to talk to someone you trust; be it aunts, uncles or grandparents. You can share your feelings and worries with them. They may not be able to fix your worries, but it is important for them to know how you feel.

You may also want to consider approaching your school counsellor or a family service centre counsellor for assistance. He or she may

explore with you on ways to approach your parents in confiding to them your difficulties.

If you find that you have difficulty talking to either of your parents, you may want to consider calling the hotline; 'Twinkle Friend': is available for children at toll-free line 1800-274 4788. Alternatively if you are not comfortable talking to someone and want to remain anonymous, you can visit the website at www.metoyou.org.sg. It provides cyber-counselling where they encourage children to confide in the counsellors anonymously.

关怀之心

关怀之心的目的是让单亲诉说所面对的忧虑，而社工会用专业的角度探讨如何协助他们。

我今年十一岁，父母两年前离婚了。我和爸爸一起住，只有周末才和妈妈在一起。可是，有时到了周末的时候，我不想和妈妈出门。妈妈常常需要工作，很少时间陪我。有的时候，因为功课很多，我会要求爸爸让我留在家把功课做完。但是爸爸说如果我不去妈妈的家，我会连累他。我爱妈妈也爱爸爸，也希望和他们一起玩，不过我真的有很多功课要做，也不想连累到爸爸。我该怎么办呢？

你似乎正处于一个艰难的时期，除了要适应家里的改变，也要应付功课越来越多的要求。对于这些改变与挑战，你又是如何看待呢？这些挑战是否带给你一些压力呢？成长的过程多多少少会带给我们一些压力，所以我们必须学习一些更有效应付压力的方法。

首先，你可以和爸爸讨论你的困难。要完成功课又要抽出时间去妈妈的家实在不容易。让爸爸了解你对于不去妈妈的家会牵连到爸爸的挣扎。

另外，你可以向妈妈解释为什么有些周末你没办法去她的家。帮助妈妈了解你在学业上所要面对的压力，以及你担心在学业上的表现。当你面对压力时，向妈妈倾诉你的难处，让她知道如何给予你所需要的扶持。

或许你能和妈妈讨论你对于她忙着工作而把你留在家的感受，并且告诉妈妈你有多珍惜和她相处的时

间。如果妈妈需要去工作，你也可以把功课带到妈妈的家去做。在等妈妈放工时，你就不会觉得是在浪费时间了。

你也可以和一个你可以信任的人倾诉，这个人可以是你的阿姨、叔叔、爷爷或奶奶。你可以和他们分享你的心情和烦恼。他们有可能无法帮你解决问题，不过让他们了解你的感受是重要的。

除此之外，你也可以向学校或家庭服务中心的辅导员寻求援助。辅导员可以和你讨论一些更好地向父母表达你的困惑的方法。

如果你觉得你有困难和父母亲谈，你也可以打电话给专门帮助小朋友的热线（Twinkle Friend 1800-274 4788）。如果你不习惯和别人面对面倾诉，你可以上网到 www.metoyou.org.sg 去寻求帮助。这是个网络辅导的网址，可以让小朋友在不透露身份的情况下找人倾诉。

After the Fall of The Towers

by Russell Friedman &
John W. James of The Grief
Recovery Institute, USA
HOW TO ADDRESS YOUR
CHILDREN

September 11, 2001 now enters our language in the same emotional way as December 7, 1941 and November 22, 1963. Most people remember where they were when they found out about Pearl Harbor and about the shooting of John F. Kennedy. For most people, their first awareness of those events came on the radio. As photo images trickled in from Pearl Harbor, and televised images filtered in from Dallas, the tragic news we had heard was matched by visual pictures.

But September 11, 2001 is plagued forever by the immediate, constant and graphic images which have already been shown thousands of times over. There was no time lag between the news and the pictures. It all happened simultaneously, in real time.

While we adults grapple with the gamut of emotions unearthed by the toppling of the World Trade Center Towers and the fatal breach of the Pentagon, the question we have heard most often at The Grief

Recovery Institute® is: **What do we say to our children?**

Children come in all ages and sizes and with their own unique personalities attached. Some are outgoing, some are shy. Intellectual and emotional maturity differs from child to child. It is impossible to put down one set of guidelines that would be applicable to all children.

Nearly everyone we talk to has told us a story about Tuesday afternoon or Tuesday night, in which they tried, with varying degrees of success to address the emotions triggered in children of all ages. As parents already know, it can be difficult to explain death to young children, who often don't grasp the idea of the permanence of death. The idea that there are evil people who want to harm us, adds another dimension to the task of communicating with little children. Children anywhere from age 3 to 8 may have difficulty with the ideas and images they have heard about and seen on the television over the

past few days. The 9-12 age bracket and the 13 and up bracket will have different fears and preoccupations than the younger children. We will give some general guidelines that have universal application for parents and other guardians,

We have been asked whether or not parents should allow their children to watch the non-stop television coverage. While we do not give advice, we recognize that since we as adults are affected by the repeated images, they will obviously affect the children. However, we are not the authority source for your children. You must make your own decisions about TV exposure for your children. It may be unrealistic at this point to keep your children entirely hidden from TV, newspapers, magazines, or even conversations about the tragedy. What is most important is that you make it safe and possible for your children to talk with you about the information they are seeing or hearing about.

In our book, ***When Children Grieve***, we address the general issues of how to talk about death with children, and whether or not to allow children to attend funerals. We also address the fact that the most important element about children and grief, is not the AGE or SIZE of the child, but the KNOWLEDGE and HONESTY of the parents and other guardians.

In the book, we do not make specific reference to the type of incident this nation and its citizens, young and old, have just experienced. Even if we had decided to address national tragedies in general, the specifics of this event are so extraordinary that it is unlikely that we could have come close to the circumstances that are producing the kind of questions and preoccupations that are affecting us and our children.

NOW TO THE CHILDREN

TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF

On Wednesday morning I sat in a chair as a young woman applied makeup to my face so I could go on a local TV show to talk to the parents about how to talk to their children. When she found out why I was there, she told me that the night before her 8 year old daughter told her that she was scared. I asked her if she told her daughter that she too was scared. She said "no." I asked her if she was scared. She said "yes." Then she asked me if she should have told her daughter that she was scared. I said, "If you expect her to tell you the truth, then you must tell her the truth."

I went on to remind her that her daughter's ability to read and interpret non-verbal communication is much more developed than

her ability to understand spoken language. In that regard, her daughter probably “knew” that her mom was scared. She then might have been confused as to why her mom’s verbal and non-verbal communication was not the same. Here are two educational ideas: It is generally accepted that non-verbal communication makes up as much as 80% of our ability to communicate. That includes body language and tone of voice. More importantly, it is believed that when faced with conflicting communications, the receiver will invariably respond to the non-verbal. Thus the saying, “Do as I say not as I do,” makes little sense, especially with the children, who may still be much more adept at non-verbal skills than verbal.

ADULTS GO FIRST

When lecturing to a group of people, we ask this question, “Do you like being lied to?” Of course, not one hand in the room goes up. Then we ask, “How many of you when asked how you feel have said ‘fine,’ when you were actually feeling lousy?” Every hand in the room goes up. We then say, “Houston, we have a problem. None of you like being lied to, yet all of you lie about your feelings.”

We go on to explain that the reason most of us do this is because when we have told the truth about how

we feel, we have been told, “Don’t feel bad, tomorrow’s another day,” or “Don’t feel bad, be grateful you have two arms and two legs.” When a loved one has died and we say how we feel, we’re told, “Don’t feel bad, she’s in a better place,” or “Don’t feel bad, she lived a full life.” If a divorce has rocked our world, we are told, “Don’t feel bad, you’ll do better next time.”

As you can plainly see, each and every circumstance is met with the illogical phrase, “Don’t Feel Bad.” This happens after you have told the truth to someone you trust. It is absurd to think that someone telling you not to feel bad would actually alter the way you feel. If it was that easy, you could just tell yourself to not feel bad. The bottom line is that after a while you start lying about how you feel, because when you tell the truth, you are told you shouldn’t feel that way. And just for the moment, we’ve been talking about adults.

Imagine what it is like for a child to trust the adults and tell the truth about their feelings, only to be told not to feel that way. In our books we use the classic example of the 5 year-old who comes home from pre-school, with tears in her eyes. Asked what happened, she says, “The other little girls were mean to me.” To which the adults say, “Don’t Feel Bad, here have a cookie, you’ll feel better.”

One more example: Again, with an audience of adults we can ask this question - "What is your response when your spouse says, 'What's wrong honey?'" The almost universal response is, "NOTHING." And that is from the person you most trust in this world.

Why? Because even your spouse is afraid they will be told - all together now - "Don't feel bad, ...fill in the blank..." Direct questions about emotions, other than the conversational courtesy of "Hi, how are you," are often perceived as interrogations or attacks.

So, if we as adults are sensitive to protect our feelings, imagine what it's like for the children.

You may have observed over time that when you ask your children how they are, they may say "fine," even when you know they're not. You may have noticed that when you ask them, "what's wrong, sweetie," they'll say "Nothing."

They have learned to protect themselves, just as you have. The problem is that we all need to have a safe place to talk about the feelings we have in response to all of life's events. The events of this week have produced the greatest single shock-wave of emotions in adults and children in America, in many decades.

The best way to find out how someone feels is to tell them how you feel. It creates safety. This is especially important with children. Thus our admonition - ADULTS GO FIRST. In regards to the events of this week, it would sound something like this: "I was so scared when I heard [or saw] about what had happened. I was worried for our safety and then I was so very sad about the people and the families who were directly affected by the tragedy."

Please notice, we are suggesting not only that the parent go first, but that they tell the simple and clear truth about their own emotions - "I was so scared...I was so sad..."

One of the most incorrect ideas we have learned is that we should "be strong" for our children. Unfortunately that usually translates into the adults hiding their own feelings and sending mixed messages to the children. We rather suggest that you "be human" for your children - it is a much more helpful way to assist them in life. We have written about this in considerable detail in ***When Children Grieve***. It is helpful to know these better ideas for day-to-day occurrences, as well as for dealing with extraordinary loss events of all magnitudes.

Let us put this as simply as possible. Please don't tell your children:

Don't Feel Bad

Don't Feel Sad

Don't Feel Scared

Oh, and if you haven't figured it out yet, don't say those things to your adult friends, either.

ONCE MAY NOT BE ENOUGH

Creating safety and open emotional communication is essential at times of crisis, when our world is turned upside down and provokes a wide array of natural fears. But, it is foolhardy to think that a singular chat may be sufficient to complete everything that accrues inside your child's heart, mind, and soul.

As you might debrief the normal events of normal days with your spouse or children, it is wise to create some conversational safety so your children can feel free to mention some of the new ideas they may have heard that day in school, at a friend's house, or on radio or TV, about the ongoing developments in this highly charged case.

Again, it is always smart for the adult to go first. Even if there is nothing new, or if you do not want to create a preoccupation in your children, you can say, "I didn't hear anything new today, what about you?" At least you can gently open

the door, without interrogating your child.

It is also a good idea to adopt a normal, conversational tone.

It might be a good idea to avoid things like, "let's sit down and talk about what's going on," which might put your child on the spot.

DON'T FIX FEELINGS

Grief is the normal and natural reaction to loss of any kind.

We have all experienced a loss of safety as well as a loss of trust. If your child said they were happy, you would not try to fix or alter that feeling. Therefore there is no need to fix a feeling of sadness or fear

Feelings need to be heard, not fixed. We all need to feel safe enough to talk about how we feel. Since feelings are normal and do not need to be fixed - Don't Fix Them.

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Knowing More About...



Facilitators and their participants



On Celebrate-Me-Day, children & parents gathered together for the Forgiveness Session





PRISM, single parents support group – single parents gathering in their group to share and support one another with our Site Coordinator, Ms Theresa Chew and our Volunteer Facilitator, Ms Evelyn Sng.



RAINBOWS is a peer support group programme for single parents and their children. This is a age directed structured programme :-

- a) Rainbows – age 7 to 12 years old
- b) Spectrum – age 13 to 16 years old
- c) Kaleidoscope – young adults from single-parent families
- d) PRISM – for single parents

The purpose of RAINBOWS is to mend the memories and heal the hurts. When a change takes place in the family, whether it is death, divorce or separation, it has a profound effect on both adults and children. In order to heal, we need to share grieving thoughts and feelings. This will help us to move to the future with hope.

Each year, RAINBOWS at HELP FSC will start in March. There will be a break in June and it will be completed in September. Each group will meet weekly. A trained facilitator will help to facilitate each of the weekly session.

If you are interested, please contact Theresa at 6457-5188 or email to theresa@helpfsc.org.sg for more information.

Sharing from

Our Single Parents



I went to HELP sometimes in year 2003 when I needed help emotionally and financially. My son was diagnosed with ADHD and Dyslexia, I was feeling helpless and FRTC-SASW TRAINING ACADEMY (I think that's the one) at Clementi referred me to HELP. I went through a series of "chats" with the counselor who was a very good listener and she helped me through the financial part as best as she could do. Still on-going whenever I needed help, she's always there.

My son and I joined the sharing programme, "RAINBOW" & "PRISM" respectively, activities organized by HELP and/or sponsored by

companies over the years, and X'mas party is one we loved most. We have never missed any X'mas gathering since we joined. We also love the outdoor activities organized for us - Sand Castle building, Flyers and musicals too. As my son grew older, he could join more activities for his age and he loved them, especially the BBBS programme that allowed him to stay at HELP FSC the whole night. He also made friends at the centre and they become close friends over time.

It was not easy when I first started, as the mentality of being "assisted" was lousy. Slowly I changed my mindset when my financial status got better as HELP became a place for my son and I to mix around and spend time, with rather than, "assisted". I had no expectation to begin with, but I made many friends through PRISM programme and we are still catching up, sharing our experiences and exchanging information.

There is no particular difference or improvements in our lives per say as my son was only 5/6 years old then, but I know I could rely on HELP to help if/when I need to. There were times when I needed to talk to someone, I could do so with my counsellor anytime soonest at her convenience. Same for my son, I could let her know when I needed someone to talk to my son when I felt I was at my wits end.

Indeed, I have friends who became single parent and I mentioned to them about HELP that they could approach. One friend did come forward but the rest for various reasons, did not. Reasons given are kid/parent introvert, distance too far, timing not right, not comfortable with the thought about approaching for help or even talking to strangers about such personal topics.

One of the events my son and I joined was the family camp in

2010 that came together with half a day of volunteer work with Lion Befrienders. Also, during the "Volunteers Day" when we organized simple games to play with volunteers who had put in their time and effort to give us wonderful times during each and every activity. These 2 events changed my mindset about HELP, knowing I am not always at the receiving end, and it was a very wonderful feeling to be able to give too.

Tammie

I came to HELP FSC in 2008. A child psychologist suggested that I could contact HELP FSC for counselling and support programmes for single parenting related issues.

I enrolled in PRISM while my boys joined the Rainbow programme Both are peer support programme for single-parent families.

It was initially tough to share about my struggles and past experiences with strangers in the PRISM group. But just over a few weekly sessions with facilitator and the group, I quickly warmed up to sharing with the other single mothers about the challenges I faced as a single mother taking care of two boys alone. Through our sharing, we quickly bonded with each other and developed friendships. The sessions gave me the opportunities to talk



about my feelings, anger, and hurt. And the best part of it... was feeling that I was heard and understood... by others who comprehend my plight and situations. Throughout the sessions, I was also rediscovering myself, my strengths and weaknesses, again. I benefitted greatly from the PRISM sessions which were better than I expected it to be.

My elder son attended the Rainbow sessions 2 years ago and is now participating in the BBBS activities organized by HELP. He was matched to a committed volunteer who brings my son on outings which gave him personal time to do things he enjoys. He also enjoys the BBBS outings with the volunteers.

My younger son completed the Rainbow sessions this year. The programme has helped him with self awareness and a better understanding of the family

situations. He enjoyed the sharing sessions.

Having participated in the programmes, I noticed the boys are more appreciative of me and had a clearer understanding of my role as a single parent. As such they are more co-operative at home.

I strongly recommend the PRISM and RAINBOWS to other single parents and their children.

Audrey

屈指数一数，参加单亲家庭服务中心(HELPFSC)已经将近第6个年头了。当初刚离婚时的心情十分混乱。在互联网上得知在新加坡有HELPFSC这个组织后，联络了他们，参加了他们的圣诞节庆祝会。见到了工作人员的热情及儿子开心的样子，我们就象在大海中抓住一个求生的机会。

开始时，只知道HELPFSC专门组办活动，让像我们这样“不完美”的家庭参加。后来参加了彩虹节目棱镜组(PRISM)。这是由一

位受过训练的义工带领我们一组单亲妈妈，每周一次的交谈讨论会。我们的遭遇及故事都很不同，但大家都能互相扶持。日子总是要过下去，目标是把孩子扶养成成人。

我的儿子7岁时参加了儿童彩虹组(Rainbow)，让他了解什么是“离婚”。他也认识了许多朋友。

中心也有一个大哥大姐节目。这年，我儿子很幸运的被分配到一个哥哥。大哥哥经常约他打球，跑步，看电影。多一个可交谈，游戏的对象，儿子非常开心。

这一切，如果没有HELPFSC的工作及义务人员是办不到的。我们就犹如一个大家庭。我衷心的感谢他们所付出的时间及精神。谢谢HELPFSC!

Mdm Lim



Community Resources

Family Counselling Service 家庭辅导服务

You may call ComCare at 1800-222 000 to find out the Family Service Centre serving your area. You may then speak to a counsellor to help you to cope with your emotional difficulties.

Centres that provide support to single-parent families:

As-Salaam PPIS - 6745 5862
Family Support Centre

HELP - 6457 5188
Family Service Centre

If your child needs someone to talk to, encourage him to call:
Tinkle Friends hotline
(For children aged 7-12 years)
Tel: 1800-274 4788

Legal Counselling Services 免费法律咨询

These are some of the agencies that provide free legal advice at certain times of the month. Some services are only for people who cannot afford to pay. Please call the centres to find out more.

Legal Clinic

Family Court
Tel: 6435 5110
Website:
www.familycourtofsg.gov.sg

Legal Aid Bureau
Tel: 1800-325 1424
Website: www.lab.gov.sg

Jamiyah Muslim Missionary Society
Tel: 6743 1211
Website:
www.jamiyah.org.sg/legal.html

Apart from the agencies listed above, you may also call the ComCare hotline at 1800-222 0000 to find out whether the Family Service Centre nearest your home provides the above services.

Housing Needs 住屋需求

Needy households may call the HDB Branch Office service line at 1800-225 5432 to get advice on issues related to mortgage loans, utilities, service and conservancy charges.

Financial and Job Aid 经济与就业协助

These are some of the agencies you can approach for help to find a job. Some of these agencies also give financial aid (if you qualify).

Community Development Councils (CDCs) 社区发展理事会

Central Singapore CDC
新加坡中央社区发展理事会
Tel: 6370 9901
Website: www.centralsingapore.org.sg

North East CDC
东北社区发展理事会
Tel: 6424 4000
Website: www.northeast.org.sg

North West CDC
西北社区发展理事会
Tel: 6767 2288 (Woodlands 兀兰)
6463 3626 (Ghim Moh 锦茂)
Website: www.northwestcdc.org.sg

South East CDC
东南社区发展理事会
Tel: 62438753
Website: www.southeastcdc.org.sg

South West CDC
西南社区发展理事会
Tel: 6899 5322 (Jurong West 裕廊西)
6314 6544
(Choa Chu Kang 蔡厝港)
6773 9220 (Clementi 金文泰)
Website: www.southwestcdc.org.sg

Self-help Groups

Chinese Development Assistance
Council (CDAC) 华社
Tel: 6841 4889

Yayasan MENDAKI
Tel: 6245 5710
Website: www.mendaki.org.sg

Singapore Indian Development
Association (SINDA)
Tel: 1800 295 4554
Website: www.sinda.org.sg

The Eurasian Association
Tel: 6447 1578
Website: www.eurasian.org

Association of Muslim Professionals
(AMP)
Tel: 6416 3966
Website: www.amp.org.sg

Other Agencies

Majlis Ugama Islam Singapura (MUIS)
Tel: 6359 1442
Website: www.muis.gov.sg

CareerLink@NTUC & WDA
Tel: 6883 5885
Website: www.ele.ecitizen.gov.sg

Childcare and Student Care Centres 托儿所与托管中心

MCYS, Family Services Division
Tel: 1800-258 5812
Websites: www.mcys.gov.sg
www.fcd.ecitizen.gov.sg
www.childcarelink.gov.sg

Services & Programmes of

HELP Family Service Centre

Casework and Counselling

It aims to provide counselling service and casework to help single-parent families to cope with their loss and other issues arising out of the divorce, separation or death of the spouse/parent in the family.

Research and Development

HELP Family Service Centre conducts research and development of new programmes to meet the needs of single-parent families. It includes training and providing consultancy on issues related to single-parent families.

Research and Development also works with the media by providing information and arranging interviews with families and social workers, for newspaper articles, radio and television programmes, to bring awareness about the concerns of single-parent families and to reach out to them.

If you are interested to know more about our research and development programme, please contact Nellie Mok at 6457 5188

For more information on our publications such Life Buoy in the Sea, Balances, Kaleidoscope, please visit <http://www.helpfsc.org.sg/resources-and-links>

Parent and Public Education

This is an awareness programme through talks, workshops and symposiums, for parents and members of the public to be more aware of the issues faced by single-parent families. The programme also aims to equip single parents with skills, knowledge for self-development and parenting.

For our upcoming talks and workshops, please visit our website at www.helpfsc.org.sg

RAINBOWS

RAINBOWS is a peer support programme for children and adults who have experienced death, divorce, separation and abandonment in the family unit. It provides an opportunity and a safe environment for grieving children and adults to sort through their pains and confusion, build self-esteem and learn to trust again.

If you are interested to know more about the programme, please contact Theresa Chew at 6457 5188 or go to <http://www.helpfsc.org.sg/our-services-programmes/rainbows>

Support Group (in Mandarin)

Single parents who need support and/or like to meet and befriend other single parents – please contact Theresa at 6457 5188.

如果你是单亲而想要和其他单亲朋友认识以及一起互相扶助 – 有兴趣者请拨电话号码 6457 5188 以 Theresa 联络。

Big Brother Big Sister Programme

Big Brother Big Sister Programme is a befriending programme that aims to reach out to children from single-parent families between 9 – 16 years old. Caring volunteers (the BIGS) will participate in group activities with the children for one year. During this time, the volunteers and children will share interests, hobbies and develop their friendship.

If you are interested to know more about the programme, please contact Yeo Jhong Ren at 6457 5188 or go to <http://www.helpfsc.org.sg/our-services-programmes/big-brother-big-sister>

Family and Youth Enrichment

This programme aims to create opportunities for networking among single-parent families, building bonding between parent and child and integrate life skills for both parent and child for mutual support among the single-parent families.

Beside centre-based activities, talks and workshops, outdoor activities

are also organized for children and families.

If you are interested to know more about the programme, please contact Colleen Chua at 6457 5188

Publicity and Community Involvement

The Publicity and Community Involvement Programme is to enhance the awareness of our services and programmes for single-parent families and the public, and to facilitate the participation of the community in our programmes.

If your organization is interested to know more about our services and programmes, and intend to help or sponsor some of our activities, please contact Colleen Chua at 6457 5188

Volunteering Opportunity

We have programmes and activities that taps on the talents and availability of volunteers. These include volunteers as facilitators in our Rainbows Programme, Big Brothers or Big Sisters to the children from single-parent families, and many other activities.

If you are keen to volunteer your service, please contact Colleen Chua at 6457 188 or go to <http://www.helpfsc.org.sg/join-us-as-volunteer>

For any enquiry, you can contact us at <http://www.helpfsc.org.sg/contact-us>



we are supported by



MISSION

- To extend assistance to single-parent families who are socially disadvantaged and vulnerable to the demands of coping alone as a single parent.
- To deliver effective social service to support and promote the physical and emotional well-being of single-parent families towards stability, growth and the acceptance of their family unit.
- To promote a greater awareness through public education in order to foster better understanding and acceptance of these families.

WHOM DO WE HELP?

We help single-parent families resulting from:

- death of one parent
- family breakdown due to divorce, desertion or separation
- birth out of wedlock

WHAT SERVICES DO WE PROVIDE?

Services and programmes for these families include:

- Casework and Counselling
- Big Brother Big Sister Programme
- Parent and Public Education
- Family and Youth Enrichment Programme
- RAINBOWS Programme
- Single Parents Support Groups

If you are a single parent or if you know of other single-parent families facing difficulties, do contact us at 6457 5188.