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# Ms Serene Goh Appointed as New Director of NHG Education



Ms Serene Goh (left) succeeded the position of Director, NHG Education from Ms Yvonne Ng on 1 June 2021.

National Healthcare Group (NHG) Education is pleased to announce the appointment of Ms Serene Goh as its new Director, with effect from 1 June 2021. Ms Goh succeeded Ms Yvonne Ng who has led the administrative team of NHG Education since 2010.

Under her leadership, Ms Ng played a key role in the growth and development of NHG Education into a community of more than 3,000 clinical educators and administrative staff who manages the training of pre-professional healthcare learners and residents, health professions education research, and the professional development of current and future healthcare professionals.

Ms Ng has since assumed her new position as Senior Director, People and Organisation Development at Woodlands Health, and continues to lead NHG College as its Executive Director.

“A Big Thank You to everyone at NHG Education for making the past 11 years such a meaningful and memorable journey for me. We had joy and tears together, achieved a lot together and it’s really hard for me to say goodbye. I’ll bring these lovely memories forward with me,” shared Ms Ng.

“Please give Serene your support as you have given to me, and more.”

Throughout her 10-year career in NHG Education, Ms Goh has held leadership positions in Pre-Professional Education (2011-2018) and NHG Residency (2018-2021), and is actively involved in various education development projects.

“I would not have been able to do all the various things in the last 10 years if not for Yvonne’s support. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to my friend and mentor, for all that she’s done for NHG Education and many of us, who have been touched by her kindness,” she shared.

On her new appointment, Ms Goh said: “I did feel some trepidation when I was first approached to take up the role as it is a big pair of shoes that I am stepping into.

“While I’ve since settled into this new role, I still have much to learn.”

“I am proud of the values and collaborative spirit that NHG Education has built and cultivated over the years... and I strive to work with the team to build an even stronger Group Education that will bring joy and fulfilment to all our stakeholders.”

- Ms Serene Goh

Looking ahead, Ms Goh said that NHG Education has set an “ambitious agenda” for its next lap, which involves moving into new areas such as uncovering new ways of delivering evidence-based education and training, introducing therapeutic patient and caregiver education, and leveraging more on education technology. And in order to meet these goals, she stressed that NHG Education must continue to be driven by the same level of “passion and commitment that got us to where we are today”.

“I am proud of the values and collaborative spirit that NHG Education have built and cultivated over the years,” said Ms Goh. “I strive to work with the team to build an even stronger Group Education that will bring joy and fulfilment to all our stakeholders.”



# Thank you, *Yvonne*.



Yvonne, we are eternally grateful for the time we have journeyed together.

**A/Prof Michelle Jong**  
Group Chief Education Officer, NHG



There was a time when medical education was an altruistic ECA (extra-curricular activity), when faculty burned the midnight oil soldiering through their tutorial notes, when faculty had to learn on the job how to teach.... Ten years ago, working alongside A/Prof Nick Chew, Yvonne led a team to change all that. Today, faculty are well supported. Development road maps are available for them. Learners have the support of coordinators. Learning system is firmly in place. At the same time Yvonne has developed a cadre of able education leaders and colleagues, each passionate, capable and collaborative. Proud of your legacy, Yvonne, and wish you all the best!

**Prof Lim Tock Han**  
Immediate past Deputy Group CEO (Education & Research), NHG



Dear Yvonne, I will always remember that day when Dow Rhon and I had that fateful conversation about your availability. We have worked together on so many things that I can't even list, let alone count. Thank you for the friendship, comradeship and buddyship!

**A/Prof Tham Kum Ying**  
Education Director (Pre-Professional Education), TTSH



Yvonne has been a pillar behind Group Education, and made significant contributions to bring it to where it stands today. I wish you all the best as you take the next steps in your NHG journey!

**Prof Benjamin Seet**  
Deputy Group CEO (Education & Research), NHG



A Journey of a thousand miles begin with a single step. Best wishes for taking the first step to your new adventure!

**A/Prof Wong Teck Yee**  
Cluster Education Director (Pre-Professional Education), NHG



Thank you for the many years of leadership in setting up and growing NHG Education. Most importantly, thank you for your friendship and guidance through the years. All the best in your next lap of your journey...

**A/Prof Nicholas Chew**  
Immediate past Group Chief Education Officer, NHG



NHG Education wouldn't be what it is today without you. Thank you for your leadership, guidance and especially your generosity and personal interest in each one of us. Do great things for WHC!

**Dr Faith Chia**  
Designated Institutional Official, NHG Residency

# The Leader, The Team and The Organisation

By Dr Khoo Hwee Sing

Our interviews with palliative care clinicians with more than 10 years of experience gave us insight into their transformational growth process, which we termed the “SCAR” model ([Struggling, Cognitive re-framing, Adapting, and Resilience](#)), and how it helps them to reduce burnout and develop resilience.

Through our [study](#), we discovered that certain characteristics of the leaders, team dynamics, and organisational cultures were eminent and crucial in supporting and mitigating risks to the palliative care clinician’s resilience, and psychological wellness.

We believe that understanding how these leader characteristics support clinicians, motivate teams, and affect organisation cultures would be useful to leaders in an increasingly complex healthcare landscape.



Dr Khoo Hwee Sing

Dr Khoo Hwee Sing is a Principal Research Analyst at HOMER (Health Outcomes and Medical Education Research). She is involved in research on clinician communication, resilience and ethics, and collective leadership evaluation for NHG.

## Leaders Who Communicate and Empower

Our respondents appreciated leaders who trusted and empowered them, allowing them the autonomy to navigate and thrive in their roles. Leaders who were able to communicate clearly and effectively (as well as regularly) were better able to engage their subordinates more positively at work.

Leaders who demonstrated that they were “present” (being in the moment, walked the ground, mindful), and created a “safe space” for respondents’ concerns to be shared truthfully were viewed as supportive and caring, while being understanding towards subordinates’ family needs reflected compassion.

Protective leaders who were described as “watching their team’s backs” reassured respondents, knowing that their leader will protect the team when faced with challenging cases. Simple and practical gestures such as bringing food for the team were also perceived as caring, and helped to reduce burnout.

## Teams who Think Alike, Grow Together

In healthcare, teams play a significant role in helping to manage burnout and resilience amongst clinician colleagues. If everyone has a common goal in mind, less effort is required to convince each team member about proposed interventions or patient discharge decisions. When encountered with a roadblock, the team tends to overcome it more readily and effectively.

However, not all teams function in this manner. Workplace tensions and unpleasant (sometimes toxic) work environment(s) develop when working relationships break down, or when team members feel that they are unable to fit in with the team.

Hence, it is important that as a team, acknowledging that one does not work alone, and incorporating perspectives and expertise from different team members while reviewing a complex case allows the team to “share the burden” and convey the benefits of multidisciplinary teamwork approach. The expression of genuine care and concern amongst fellow team members – especially when dealing with emotional distress from a challenging case – was also much appreciated by our respondents.

This process of growing together through challenging and tough situations builds the camaraderie of the team, assisting the process of positive conflict resolution, and allows for conflicts to be resolved openly and positively.

## Supportive and ‘Open’ Organisations

The organisation’s philosophy and culture are usually embodied by its top administrative leaders such as the CEO and senior management. Our respondents shared that having supportive organisation leaders who believed in their work played a vital role in helping them develop resilience, and keep burnout at bay.

They elaborated that these senior administrative leaders are normally the ones who would “walk the ground”, and establish open communication channels to learn about workplace problems and concerns. These leaders also usually demonstrate their support for staff well-being and development through training opportunities, organising ‘bonding’ activities, and making conscientious efforts in managing staff workload.

While our study focused on these three distinct categories: leaders, teams and organisations, we believe that in reality, all three must coexist together in order to help individuals, teams and the organisation itself to manage burnout and develop resilience. As the saying goes, “a chain is only as strong as its weakest link”.

# A LOT-TE to Learn from Transdisciplinary Medical Education



Fourth-year medical students Mr Lim (second from left) and Mr Kwang (third from left) received the Best Peer Teacher Award from their tutors, Drs Clement Chia (left) and Ruth Chua (right).

Medical students are now able to maximise their learning opportunities in two medical subspecialties when they apply for Khoo Teck Puat Hospital's (KTPH) inaugural Learning Oriented Teaching in Transdisciplinary Education (LOTTE) elective posting.

Launched in April this year, the four-week programme focuses on undergraduate medical education in an inter-professional collaborative setting through observation and presentation of complex clinical cases, with its teaching-learning activities underpinned by the Learning Oriented Teaching (LOT) theory.

Dr Clement Chia (Consultant, Department of General Surgery, KTPH), who initiated LOTTE shared that the inspiration for this elective posting stems from his experience in managing older surgical patients with complex medical comorbidities and frailty, and witnessing how transdisciplinary collaboration improves outcomes holistically in this group of geriatric patients.

Being redeployed to a dedicated COVID-19 ward at the height of the pandemic reaffirms his belief that transdisciplinary care improves patient outcomes. "I was able to deliver care through transdisciplinary sharing of knowledge and learning from fellow physician counterparts as little was known about the disease back then," he said, adding that the transdisciplinary collaboration

between doctors and nurses also led to frugal innovation – including reducing complex processes and increasing the efficient use of resources- in KTPH during the pandemic.

Under the mentorship of A/Prof Yip Chee Chew (Education Director, KTPH) and in collaboration with Dr Priscilla Ng (Consultant, Department of Geriatric Medicine, KTPH), LOTTE came into fruition after many hours of brainstorming, researching, and designing the theoretical framework and curriculum.

LOTTE differs from traditional single-discipline electives as it emphasises inter-professional collaboration and collective learning involving the surgeon, physician and students. The first run of LOTTE consisted of seven transdisciplinary themes. An example of a transdisciplinary theme would be 'Palliative Surgery'; offered by both a palliative physician and an oncology surgeon.

Students divided their time equally in both subspecialties, attending ward rounds, clinics, operating theatres and home visits; maximising their learning opportunities in two subspecialties as they follow their patients' journey from 'Start to Finish'. To encapsulate their learning, the students presented real-life complex cases via Zoom in the last week of the elective to their peers and faculty.

"The peer tutoring sessions not only demonstrate how much they have internalised what they have learnt; it also serves as a form of formative assessment," said Dr Ng. "This (LOT) approach also provides us (the teachers) with a better understanding of students' priorities and learning preferences."

"As one of the tutors involved, it was very fulfilling to witness how students were able to use this elective to consolidate their learning from prior medical and surgical rotations into a comprehensive understanding of the transdisciplinary theme and patient at hand," said Dr Shaun Chan (Associate Consultant, General Surgery, KTPH).

Year Four medical students Mr Brandon Lim and Mr Kwang Yao Zu from the National University of Singapore Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine, who enrolled in the Palliative Surgery elective theme, shared that the highlight of the elective was being able to experience transdisciplinary clinical practice in action.

"We witnessed how transdisciplinary team members worked together to bring comfort and relief to patients with advanced diseases," shared Mr Lim.

"We visited terminally-ill patients under the HCA Home Hospice Care Service and observed how they were cared for in the comfort of their homes with loved ones by their side in the final days of their journey. It gave us a glimpse into the day to day issues that terminally ill patients face," shared Mr Kwang.

Dr Chia stressed that in an increasingly ageing population and complex healthcare landscape, medical graduates will need to manage "comorbidities that may be beyond one's expertise".

"I hope that LOTTE provides an introduction to transdisciplinary education and highlights the importance of integrating competencies from various disciplines in preparation for future practice," he said.



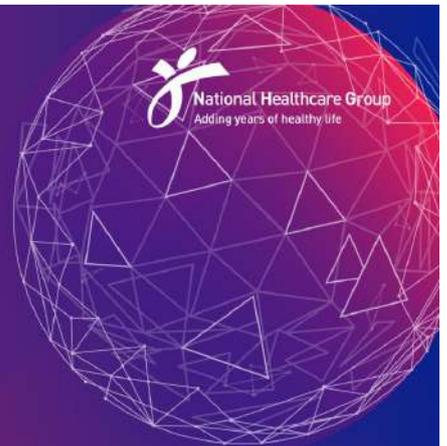
Dr Clement Chia is Consultant Endocrine and Breast Surgeon in Khoo Teck Puat Hospital. He is an advocate for transdisciplinary education and believes that inter-professional collaboration provides the synergism and spark for excellence in healthcare.

Dr Chia would also like to thank the collaborative efforts of all the transdisciplinary educators who made this inaugural run of LOTTE possible. They include Associate Professors Tan Kok Yang, Toh Hong Chuen, Tavintharan Subramaniam, Drs Desmond Ooi, Tan Mingyuan, Tan Bo Chuan, Ruth Chua, Benjamin Lam, Visnja Baksa Reynolds and Gabriel Cher.



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# Moving Forward with e-Collective Leadership



'Live' demonstration of a dyad conversation

Following National Healthcare Group (NHG) College's efforts in redesigning 70 per cent of its programme offerings amidst this pandemic, the Collective Leadership (CL) programme resumed in the last quarter of FY2020 with an exciting refresh in the online sphere, after several months of training hiatus. 20 leaders across NHG and its institutions were brought together on 4 February and 2 March 2021 through the now-familiar Zoom platform.

Facilitated by NHG College's Executive Director, Ms Yvonne Ng, and Tan Tock Seng Hospital's (TTSH) Organisation Development (OD) Director, Ms Koh Huey Bing, the NHG leaders engaged in a series of learnings on trust and relationship building, vision sharing, and understanding themselves through somatic, emotional and linguistic patterns.

The core organising team from NHG College and TTSH OD collaborated with the CL facilitators from different institutions and health professions, to design an online version of the programme. The revamped programme was specially curated to be as experiential, thoughtful and relevant as the face-to-face conversations.

The result was an interactive hybrid programme that consists of self-directed online learning elements and two facilitated virtual sessions that were conducted a month apart. The participants were engaged through a variety of learning videos, readings, reflections and assignments for practice that provided them with the opportunity to reflect and apply thinking, research, and self-management skills.

The facilitators also tapped on the expertise of the Learning Design team at NHG College to create bite-sized videos, demonstrating how the topics shared during the CL conversations can be applied in their everyday work lives. These videos included topics like "How to Share a Vision", by Associate Professor Koh Kwong Fah (Clinical Director for Training and Education, Woodlands Health Campus); "How to Shift Others through Effective Questions" by Associate Professor Clare Yeo, (Senior Principal Clinical Psychologist, Institute of Mental Health); and "Understanding your Emotional Patterns" by Ms Koh.

"The pace of the programme and length of topics were just right. A very well-run programme made possible by very experienced facilitators and fully engaged participants even though it was conducted virtually for the first time," shared one of the leaders who participated in the CL Online run.



Collective Leadership conversations held via zoom for the first time



A/Prof Koh Kwong Fah (seated) recording eLearning videos for the Collective Leadership programme