

## KERATAN AKHBAR

(Bahagian Canselori)

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Tajuk : Unimas-MHA talk on mental health literacy

# Unimas-MHA talk on mental health literacy

**KUCHING:** Universiti Malaysia Sarawak's Centre for Disability Studies (CoDS) in collaboration with Mental Health Association of Sarawak (MHA) recently conducted a workshop on 'Youth Mental Health First Aid: Approach to Suicide, Depression, Self-harm and Psychosis' to introduce the concept and discuss its local relevance to the participants about mental health issues.

CoDS director Assoc Prof Dr Ling How Kee said not many in Sarawak recognise the early signs that a young person was feeling troubled and would benefit from help from those trained in mental health.

"When tragedy happens, people wonder why no one realised it

earlier yet no one thinks to ask for training. We need to increase, what is now called 'Mental Health Literacy'," she said in a statement received here yesterday.

The workshop was conducted by a RMIT Melbourne lecturer on social work, Assoc Prof Dr Jenny Martin, and a trained youth mental health first-aider.

The seminar participants planned to work together to develop ways of providing such training and ensure it is relevant to the Sarawak culture and context.

One of the big challenges will be to break the current stigma surrounding mental health problems – an issue MHA tries to address.

Unimas social work lecturer Gill

Raja said that society needed to be more informed so that they would become more understanding and accept people experiencing mental health condition.

"Currently, the society's attitude can add to people's problems rather than help them open up and seek help. We have to realise there is nothing to fear – mental health issues, like depression and anxiety, are very common and can be overcome."

Members of the public or organisations interested in promoting mental health awareness are welcomed to contact MHA at 082-629061 or 012-8081023, 085-415199 (Miri) or 084-313602 (Sibu).

Alternatively, email to [mhasarawak69@gmail.com](mailto:mhasarawak69@gmail.com).



Dr Ling (left) and Dr Adeline Wong (right) from MHA Miri present a token of appreciation to Dr Martin.