

English translation

Two young graduates overcome challenges, build resilience

From hardship to strength: Stories of resilience, NUS and NTU graduates graduate with flying colours

NATASHA MUSTAFA



Ms Aisha Shamsuddin (second from right) and Mr Mohammad Shakir Mohd, share stories of resilience in facing personal challenges With NoTapis podcast producer and presenter, Ms Natasha Mustafa. - Photo BH

Looking out the window of her university hall, Ms Aisha Shamsuddin, 24, suddenly thought of something she shouldn't have done.

Startled by the thought, Ms Aisha initially ignored the signs.

However, as a shy and introverted individual, she began to be plagued by an inexplicable sadness and lacked motivation to do her daily tasks.

“Sometimes I would suddenly cry and not know why I felt that way.

“There were days I felt like I didn't want to wake up.

“Even though I knew I had to do something, I couldn't do it at all,” she said.

Ms Aisha was then encouraged to seek help and was diagnosed with anxiety and major depressive disorder in 2021.



Ms Aisha Shamsuddin, 24, recounted her journey with mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, as well as the challenges of caring for her mother who was battling breast cancer. - Photo BH

In an episode of Berita Harian's (BH) NoTapis series, Ms Aisha said the diagnosis was not a surprise to her as she recognised the signs of mental health issues.

"I think it happened because when I started university, the Covid-19 situation was just starting to stabilise and there were a lot of things going on at home.

"So when I suddenly had those thoughts, it was quite surprising because it wasn't me," said the Bachelor of Social Sciences with Honours (Distinction) in Communication and New Media graduate from the National University of Singapore (NUS).

The eldest of two siblings had already experienced a “rollercoaster” or emotional ups and downs in the years before she studied at the ivory tower.

In 2018, her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer and Ms Aisha had to take on a bigger role at home doing housework to help her family.

At the same time, her father's income as a real estate agent was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic at the time.

Despite facing challenging circumstances, Ms Aisha did not give up.

She began to express her feelings and seek out a support system at school to help her cope.

“Alhamdulillah, I received a lot of help from my professors who understood and guided me.

“If I needed help with my schoolwork or needed more time to complete it, they gave me space to continue to excel,” she explained.

Another individual who showed similar resilience is Mr Mohammad Shakir Mohd, 26.

At the age of 18, Mr. Shakir suffered a stroke due to a brain haemorrhage that affected his vision and balance.

According to him, the haemorrhage in his brain was caused by a ruptured blood vessel.

“I could not control my body. I lost my balance and at that time needed a cane to walk.

“My vision is also affected because I have double vision; I can’t move the left side of my face.

“It’s confusing because sometimes I have issues walking because I can’t see what’s in front of me clearly,” said the man who successfully completed his studies at Nanyang Technological University (NTU).

Because of his condition, the youngest of four siblings, he said he has to work harder.



Mr Mohammad Shakir Mohd, 26, recalled his experience of suffering a stroke in his second year of junior college, as well as the emergency surgery he had to undergo and the recovery process. - BH Photo

For example, he needed extra time when revising because of his impaired vision.

However, Mr Shakir, who is also a former student of Jurong Junior College (JJC), said it never dampened his spirits to continue doing what he loves, which is chemistry.

He received a lot of support from the Accessible Education and Inclusion team of NTU's Student Affairs Office.

The team helped him secure a work-study opportunity after several companies turned him down because they were unable to change their workplace environment and procedures to allow him to work safely in their labs.

After four years, Mr Shakir successfully graduated with a Bachelor of Engineering with Honors in Materials Engineering, with a specialisation in Materials and Sustainability, and Nanoscience and Nanotechnology.

Commenting on his experience studying at university, Mr Shakir said:

“University is an opportunity for you to socialise and make new friends.

“Don't be afraid to ask for help if you have a problem.

“The important thing is to find a ‘tribe’ (group) that you can trust and that will help you,” he said.

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Original Malay text

Dua siswazah muda jaya atasi cabaran, pupuk daya tahan

Daripada kesulitan kepada kekuatan: Kisah daya tahan, siswazah NUS dan NTU lulus cemerlang

NATASHA MUSTAFA



Cik Aisha Shamsuddin (dua dari kanan) dan Encik Encik Mohammad Shakir Mohd, berkongsi kisah tentang daya ketahanan dalam menghadapi cabaran peribadi Bersama penerbit dan penyampai podcast NoTapis, Cik Natasha Mustafa. - Foto BH

Merenung ke luar tingkap bilik dewan di universiti, Cik Aisha Shamsuddin, 24 tahun, tiba-tiba memikirkan sesuatu yang tidak sepatutnya beliau lakukan.

Terkejut dengan pemikiran tersebut, Cik Aisha pada awalnya tidak mengendahkan tanda-tanda tersebut.

Namun, sebagai seorang individu yang pemalu dan introvert, beliau mula dibelenggu rasa sedih yang tidak dapat dijelaskan dan tidak mempunyai motivasi untuk melakukan tugas hariannya.

“Kadangkala saya secara tiba-tiba menangis dan tidak tahu mengapa saya rasa begitu.

“Ada hari saya rasa macam tidak ingin bangun.

“Walaupun saya tahu saya harus melakukan sesuatu, saya tidak dapat melakukannya langsung,” katanya.

Cik Aisha kemudian terdorong untuk mendapatkan bantuan dan didiagnosis mengalami keresahan dan gangguan kemurungan utama pada 2021.



Cik Aisha Shamsuddin, 24 tahun, menceritakan laluan perjalanan beliau dengan masalah kesihatan mental, termasuk kemurungan dan keresahan, serta cabaran menjaga ibunya yang sedang berjuang melawan barah buah dada. - Foto BH

Dalam episod siri NoTapis Berita Harian (BH), Cik Aisha berkata diagnosis tersebut bukan satu kejutan baginya kerana beliau mengenali tanda-tanda isu kesihatan mental.

“Saya rasa terjadi demikian kerana ketika saya mula pengajian universiti, keadaan Covid-19 baru mula stabil dan terdapat pelbagai perkara yang berlaku di rumah.

“Jadi apabila saya tiba-tiba ada pemikiran seperti itu, ia agak mengejutkan kerana ia bukan diri saya,” kata lulusan Sarjana Muda Sains Kemasyarakatan dengan Kepujian (Kecemerlangan) dalam Komunikasi dan Media Baru di Universiti Nasional Singapura (NUS).

Anak sulung dua beradik itu sudah mengalami ‘rollercoaster’ atau turun naik emosi pada tahun-tahun sebelum beliau menuntut di menara gading.

Pada 2018, ibunya didiagnosis mengalami barah buah dada dan Cik Aisha perlu memainkan peranan lebih besar di rumah melakukan kerja rumah untuk membantu keluarganya.

Pada masa yang sama, pendapatan bapanya sebagai seorang ejen hartanah terjejas ekoran pandemik Covid-19 ketika itu.

Meskipun berhadapan dengan keadaan yang mencabar, Cik Aisha tidak berputus asa.

Beliau mula meluahkan perasaannya dan mencari sistem sokongan di sekolah untuk menangani keadaannya.

“Alhamdulillah saya terima banyak bantuan daripada profesor saya yang memahami dan membimbing saya.

“Sekiranya saya memerlukan bantuan untuk melakukan kerja sekolah atau memerlukan lebih masa untuk menghabiskan kerja tersebut, mereka memberi ruang bagi saya untuk terus cemerlang,” jelasnya.

Seorang lagi individu yang menunjukkan daya tahan serupa ialah Encik Mohammad Shakir Mohd, 26 tahun.

Pada usia 18 tahun, Encik Shakir mengalami serangan angin ahmar ekoran pendarahan di otak yang menjejaskan penglihatan dan keseimbangan badannya.

Menurut beliau, pendarahan di otaknya berlaku akibat saluran darah yang pecah.

“Saya tidak dapat mengawal badan saya. Saya kehilangan daya keseimbangan dan ketika itu memerlukan tongkat untuk berjalan.

“Penglihatan saya juga terjejas kerana saya mengalami penglihatan berganda; saya tidak dapat menggerakkan bahagian kiri muka saya.

“Ini mengelirukan kerana kadangkala saya mengalami isu berjalan kerana tidak dapat lihat apa di hadapan saya dengan jelas,” kata beliau yang berjaya melanjutkan pengajian di Universiti Teknologi Nanyang (NTU).

Disebabkan keadaannya, anak bongsu empat beradik itu, berkata beliau harus bekerja lebih keras.



Encik Mohammad Shakir Mohd, 26 tahun, mengimbas pengalaman beliau mengalami serangan angin ahmar semasa berada di tahun kedua di maktab rendah, serta pembedahan kecemasan yang perlu dilalui serta proses pemulihan. - Foto BH

Sebagai contoh, beliau memerlukan lebih masa ketika mengulangkaji kerana penglihatannya yang terjejas.

Namun Encik Shakir, yang juga bekas pelajar Maktab Rendah Jurong (JJC) berkata ia tidak pernah melemahkan semangatnya untuk terus melakukan apa yang beliau suka iaitu kimia.

Beliau menerima banyak sokongan daripada pasukan Pendidikan Boleh Diakses dan Penyertaan Pejabat Hal Ehwal Pelajar NTU.

Pasukan itu membantunya mendapatkan peluang bekerja sambil belajar setelah beberapa syarikat menolaknya kerana tidak dapat mengubah sekitaran dan prosedur tempat kerja bagi membolehkan beliau bekerja dengan selamat di makmal mereka.

Setelah empat tahun, Encik Shakir berjaya menamatkan pengajian dan menggenggam ijazah Sarjana Muda Kejuruteraan dengan Kepujian dalam Kejuruteraan Bahan, dengan pengkhususan dalam Bahan dan Kemampunan, serta Nanosains dan Nanoteknologi.

Mengulas pengalamannya menuntut di universiti, Encik Shakir berkata:

“Universiti ini adalah peluang bagi anda untuk bergaul dan mencari rakan-rakan baru.

“Jangan kluatir untuk meminta bantuan sekiranya anda mengalami masalah.

“Yang penting adalah anda cari ‘tribe’ (kumpulan) yang anda boleh dipercayai dan membantu anda,” ujarnya.

<https://www.beritaharian.sg/rencana/dua-siswazah-muda-jaya-atasi-cabaran-pupuk-daya-tahan>