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Mavis Hee on mental health recovery and her longing to lead 'a normal life'

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**Bryan Lim** · Contributor

7 August 2023 · 2-min read



Mavis Hee with celebrity hairstylist David Gan. (Photo: Instagram/gandavid_davidgan)

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Local songbird Mavis Hee, who has been rather reclusive in the last decade before her recent performances, recently shed a little more light about her [mental health](#) journey.

Speaking to [The Straits Times](#), the 48-year-old said that she is ready to take on more performances now.

After her surprise appearance at the River Hongbao event in January, Hee also performed in April and July.

Most recently, she shared the stage with Kit Chan and other local singers on Saturday (5 Aug) at the Gardens by the Bay and Mediacorp National Day Concert.

And, later this month, Hee will headline a concert in China with five other female artistes - Hong Kong singers Joey Yung and Vivian Chow, Malaysian singer Fish Leong and fellow Singaporean singers Stefanie Sun and Tanya Chua.

Coping with schizophrenia

She also spoke candidly about the time she sought treatment for schizophrenia at the Institute of Mental Health (IMH), battling with relapses and her longing to lead a "normal life".

"Sometimes when I felt lost, I would go on a bus or MRT ride to take in the sights. I looked at the people around me and told myself, 'If they can find strength [in life], so can I,'" she told The Straits Times.

Hee also volunteers for mental health causes with organisations such as the non-profit Silver Ribbon (Singapore), saying that volunteer work makes her happy.

Additionally, she destresses through art and creates paintings with acrylic paints and crayons.

She also picked up needlework to make accessories such as berets fashioned from upcycled materials.

Previously diagnosed with clinical depression

Once a rising star in the region who was famous for singing *Moonlight in the City* (theme song of the 1996 Channel 8 drama *Tofu Street*), Hee later shied away from the public eye but in 2006, opened up to The Straits Times and confirmed that she was diagnosed with depression.

At that time, she said, "I'm okay now. Thank you for your concern. Please send my regards to everyone too."

She added, "I never thought I would have clinical depression as friends have known me to be an optimistic person. I guess it really shows that the problem can hit anyone."

Hee also expressed her desire to "leave the unhappiness behind and move on".

As for her absence from entertainment, she said in 2006, "I have always kept a low profile. I know people have been trying to reach me, but I didn't want to actively seek them out. I believe that somehow, some time, we'll finally meet, so I just let things be."