

REFRAMING TEACHING AND LEARNING

Family Therapeutic Justice Certification Programme

Following the recommendations of the Review and Enhance Reforms in the Family Justice System (RERF) Committee, a working group comprising representatives from the Singapore Academy of Law, the Family Justice Courts (FJC) and the Law Society of Singapore's Family Law Practice Committee collaborated to conceptualise a voluntary certification programme for family law practitioners. Known as the Family Therapeutic Justice Certification Programme, it aims to equip them with relevant multi-disciplinary specialist skillsets.

A total of 40 family law practitioners attended and completed the first run of the programme, which was conducted by the Singapore Academy of Law in October/November 2021. The second run is projected to take place in the fourth quarter of 2022.

Conversation Circles on Therapeutic Justice

As part of the revamped curriculum for its Judiciary-Wide Induction Programme, the Singapore Judicial College introduced 'Conversation Circles' to encourage the sharing of judicial perspectives on why judges do the work they do. Some of these sessions focused on Therapeutic Justice (TJ). The Presiding Judge of the FJC, Justice Debbie Ong, engaged in Conversation Circles with newly-appointed judges and shared the FJC's perspective on what TJ is, why the role of FJC judges encompasses practising TJ, and the practical implications of TJ in action.

The FJC is engaging in efforts to advance therapeutic justice among family law practitioners and newly-appointed judges.



A programme involving the FJC-ISCA Panel of Financial Experts was piloted in 2021.

DELIVERING THERAPEUTIC JUSTICE IN MATRIMONIAL MATTERS

In December 2020, the FJC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Institute of Singapore Chartered Accountants (ISCA) to form a Panel of Financial Experts made up of ISCA members who will provide neutral valuation reports in Family Court proceedings. A pilot programme was launched in 2021 and has since concluded. Revisions were made to the key documents and workflows for implementation with a view of relaunching the scheme.

The scheme seeks to promote resolution amongst parties in a non-adversarial manner and save costs for all involved, so that they can find a financially sustainable way forward. Such neutral valuation reports will facilitate and enable a more amicable resolution of matrimonial issues, which is core to the delivery of TJ.

This scheme was neatly summarised in the case of *VZD v VZE* [2022] SGFC 1, where the Court highlighted that a financial expert would assist the Court and the Parties by providing an equitable and objective valuation of the matrimonial assets under contest, thereby allowing justice to be administered more effectively and efficiently.

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The Community