

MALAYSIA'S HEALTHIEST WORKPLACE — AIA Vitality —

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BEST WORKPLACE PRACTICES

Taking care of the carers — SOCSCO Rehabilitation Centre, Melaka

SOCSCO Rehabilitation Centre in Melaka is well known for its state-of-the-art centre that offers comprehensive medical and vocational rehabilitation services for the millions of workers in Malaysia insured under the Social Security Organisation (SOCSCO). This is to help workers with disabilities to gradually assimilate into the workforce and society.

However, in order to effectively help those who have suffered a sickness or an accident to adapt and continue to earn a living, the people working there must be taken care of first.

“We accommodate all sorts of disabilities. What we realised when the first 30 patients entered the rehab centre is that it was full of depression. They were very sad and down and we needed to provide hope and the highest level of care,” says SOCSCO Chief Executive Officer Datuk Seri Dr Mohammed Azman Aziz Mohammed.

“The staff members need to be very active and highly motivated to make sure they can overcome that. We needed to motivate the patients,” he adds.

Since it started operations in 2014, the centre has won numerous awards in terms of its design and infrastructure. The Zen-infused facility occupies 55 acres of lush greenery and boasts water features and a connecting pathway with minimal

slopes and tactile paving to allow the disabled to move around easily. Other common facilities include a working gym and a swimming pool. Azman notes that these features are used by both the patients and the staff.

“There has never been a rehab centre like us in this region before. We were lucky to have been able to plan our operations from the infrastructure design stage, so many of the facilities could be incorporated into it.

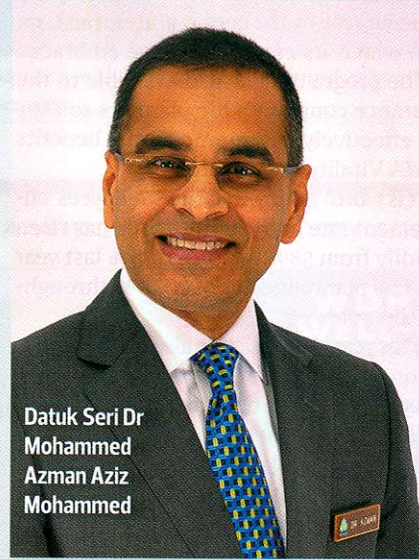
“But when you have a world-class facility, you need world-class people to operate it. [Otherwise], your facility will go down the drain,” he says.

This is the first complex in the world to have medical and vocational support.

Azman believed that a positive culture needed to be introduced and the organisation settled on Japan’s way of living “ikigai” (a reason for being), which constitutes “doing what you love using your capabilities to provide what the world needs and get paid for it”.

Apart from that, the SOCSCO Rehabilitation Centre also champions safety and health for the healthcare industry.

“In workplaces like factories and manufacturing, there are a lot of guidelines for prevention, occupational safety and health. But we found out that there was not much talk about guidelines for



healthcare workers — whether the nurses suffer from back pain, whether the doctors are working long hours, exposure to chemicals or even the absence of natural light in a closed environment [for example],” Azman says.

This led to the introduction of a framework for a culture of safety and health. One simple example are the machine-assisted hospital beds that help patients move into an upright position as well as patient hoists. These keep the heavy-lifting out of the nurses’ job scope.

“We also have a 24/7 childcare centre to accommodate our late-shift staff, which sits within a 1,000 sq ft child-friendly space [in a medical facility],” says Azman.

Other policies to enforce a better work culture were introduced, including a 40-hour-week, free annual health screening and fitness test, maternity and paternity leave, annual holiday allowance and no-sick-leave allowance, among others.

“To have a balance is very important. Employees should get enough rest to maintain the world-class services they offer,” he says, pointing out that 60% to 70% of the centre’s employees take leave regularly at an average of two days per month while all the employees have taken leave so far this year.

The facility is currently operating at near-full capacity, and SOCSCO plans to emulate the same ecosystem in its future rehabilitation centres. Azman also says that more lounges and existing facilities will be improved to ensure the staff can operate in top-notch conditions.

“To us, the rehab centre is a stage. Each staff member is an actor who plays the role of a caregiver. But when a staff member becomes stressed, he needs to go backstage ... so the plan is to further establish this backstage environment so the staff members can continue delivering top-notch services.”