

New collaboration helps raise mental health awareness through coffee, music

Yao Minji

China's e-commerce sites and social media are filled with "600 crossovers," from recycled bags stating "happily discharged" to refrigerator magnets in the shape of green street signs, thanks to the newly gained popularity of 600 Wanping Road S.

It's home to the Shanghai Mental Health Center. Once a place that locals shied away from, it's now become an unusual *wanghong*, or Internet sensation, since last year's Mid-Autumn Festival, when its mooncakes rose to Internet fame.

"It was common to have teenage patients who were ashamed of coming," Xie Bin, the center's Party chief, told Shanghai Daily.

"Now, thanks to the center's fame, some children are even proud of it. It helps to raise awareness of mental health issues and encourage people to face such issues rather than hide them."

According to the World Health Organization, the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered an increase in anxiety and depression worldwide. Many people, including in China, may feel more anxious or stressed.

The center is "letting people feel cool about mental health," collaborating with a number of institutes to create crossover products, all of which have been sold out in days, while unauthorized versions continue to fill the Internet.

The latest addition to the "600 crossover" is a set of drip-bag coffee, a collaboration with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra.

The first batch, which came in 5,000 sets on the orchestra's WeChat mall, was sold out



The Shanghai Mental Health Center, located at 600 Wanping Road S. in Xuhui District, recently teamed up with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra to expand its "600 crossover" portfolio. — Ti Gong

within a day.

"Quite a few friends asked me to seek advice from Mr Xie. We met at an event, which made me realize how common it is to have mental health issues now," said Zhou Ping, head of the symphony orchestra.

"Many people aren't ashamed of confronting these issues and trying to solve them now, so it's a great opportunity to work with the health center. It will give me great joy if more people are aware of mental health because of our coffee."

Each set contains 10 different blends of coffee, matched with a common emotional symptom and a piece of classical music that can be heard after scanning the QR code on the package. Accompanying the music is an introduction of the symptom and tips on relieving stress, narrated by doctors from the health center.

The two institutes worked together on naming the symptoms with buzzwords, or creating cool new names, as well as matching them with classical music.

"It's more for a primary introduction. The musical pieces are matched for fun rather than medical reasons. In the future, we can probably explore whether certain music pieces work better for certain symptoms," said Qiao Ying from the health center, one of the masterminds behind the coffee's design and one of the narrators.

"For this collaboration, we want to make it look cool, trendy and down to earth, so that mental health doesn't appear frightening and classical music doesn't seem inaccessible."

Qiao selected some of the most common issues among

patients who sought help at the center, and behaviors that are widely criticized on the Internet.

For example, the buzzword "Versailles literature" refers to

a type of social media posts flaunting wealth in a subtle or passive-aggressive way. *Fan er sai*, or humble-brag, turned viral in 2020 and has since become a frequently used buzzword.

For the coffee bag, *fan er sai* is considered a symptom of an urge to feel privileged. The prescribed music is "Fanfare for the Common Man" by American composer Aaron Copland.

"Copland is proud of his music and of the musical world surrounding his work," the prescription states.

Written in 1942, the piece is for "honoring the common man." It begins with a haunting trumpet before being joined by other brass instruments, and then leads to the triumphant conclusion. It has often been used in sports events for its upbeat aura.

"Listening to music is a good way to relax, I'm actually quite used to turning on music before I take a nap every day," said Xie.

"Just choose the music you like, and it helps relieve stress. Exercising is also a good way to relax."



Doctors from the Shanghai Mental Health Center share coffee and health tips with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra. — Ti Gong