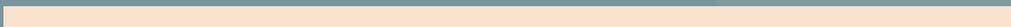




MUSTARD SEED

FOR EVERYTHING
IN BETWEEN



TOTAL COMMUNICATION
CHANGING LIVES. TOUCHING FUTURES.

SPEECH & LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS
EDUCATIONAL THERAPISTS



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OUR PRACTICE

Dear caregiver,

As a centre, our mission is to foster our student's growth and development so that they will enjoy a high quality of life. We value personal, academic and social success, and we strive to help our clients actively engage in their environment. We understand the importance of supportive guiding relationships, and we seek to use this to facilitate our client's development, and to support families to foster and use this with their child.

As a team, we value creativity and sensitivity in our work with our clients and each other. We look holistically at the 'big picture', and we maintain our integrity while striving to be the best at what we do.

Every student is an unique individual

All students have their own insight and experience the world in their own special way. We believe all students have the will and capacity to share this with us, and work towards facilitating this. Assessment and therapy is carefully planned to work with each student's individual strengths and challenges, with the ultimate goal to increase their quality of life, and that of their family and community.

Warmest Regards,

Total Communication



OUR PRACTICE

Evidence Based Practice

Paramount to our practice is using techniques that have been scientifically proven to be effective. We value keeping our knowledge of the latest tools and research up to date, and continually undertake professional development. The insight from other disciplines and professionals is important to understand our client's life outside of the clinical sessions, so we strive to integrate our practice with all who work with them, such as teachers and other health professionals. We blend science with art by integrating our collective wisdom gathered through years of experience and insight working with students to ensure that our service is tailored to their needs.

Family Centered Practice

Current scientific research shows us that supportive guiding relationships form the basis for development; firstly from caregivers, and also from significant and supportive adults. For this reason, we value the role that families play in our client's lives, and work closely with them to ensure they meet their potential and achieve a better quality of life.

Integrity

We thoughtfully match each client to the right treatment, with the right professional, in the right dosage to help our clients achieve their goals.



OUR TEAM

We are a family-centred practice, comprised of Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists and Educational Therapists. We seek to share our diverse and collective gifts and skills to provide the highest level of service in the areas of speech, language, communication, cognition, gross/fine motor skills, socio-emotional development, academic performance and functional life skills. We work closely with families to ensure that our clients meet their potential and achieve a better quality of life.

We value evidence-based practice and therefore, strive to keep abreast with the latest tools and practices by continually undertaking professional development opportunities. We blend science with art by integrating our collective wisdom gathered through years of experience and insight in working with students to ensure that our service is tailored to their needs.

Our team seeks to deliver holistic, therapeutic solutions for our clients by integrating expertise from each of the uniquely trained professionals on our team. We employ a trans-disciplinary model of practice, which allows us to formulate comprehensive goals and optimise outcomes by taking into account the biological, psychological and social aspects of the student and his/her environment.

“ We value evidence-based practice and therefore, strive to keep abreast with the latest tools and practices... ”



MUSTARD SEED

Over the years, we have seen students with unaddressed difficulties flounder with the academic curriculum and 'fall through the cracks' as the curriculum becomes increasingly complex. This can often lead to increasing frustrations, emotional outbursts, decreased self-esteem and isolation from others. The repercussions of leaving these areas unaddressed can be costly to the individuals' quality of life and well-being. However, timely and appropriate intensive intervention can change the trajectory of these individuals' paths and can help them attain success academically and socially. The Mustard Seed Programme offers intensive therapy solutions for individuals with multiple difficulties in several core areas of functioning - cognitive processes, communication, motor skills and who are struggling to cope with the typical pace of their academic curricula.

It aims to provide intensive therapy to **remediate these areas** within a regular weekly schedule to optimize outcomes. To this end, individuals may need to consider taking a gap period from school or part-time schooling, so that adequate time is invested into strengthening these core areas.



“ The Mustard Seed Programme offers intensive therapy solutions for individuals with multiple difficulties... who are struggling to cope with the typical pace of their academic curricula. ”



MUSTARD SEED

Response to Intervention (RTI)¹

Tier 3

Intensive, Individual Interventions

- Individual students
- Assessment-based
- High intensity procedures, of longer duration

Tier 2

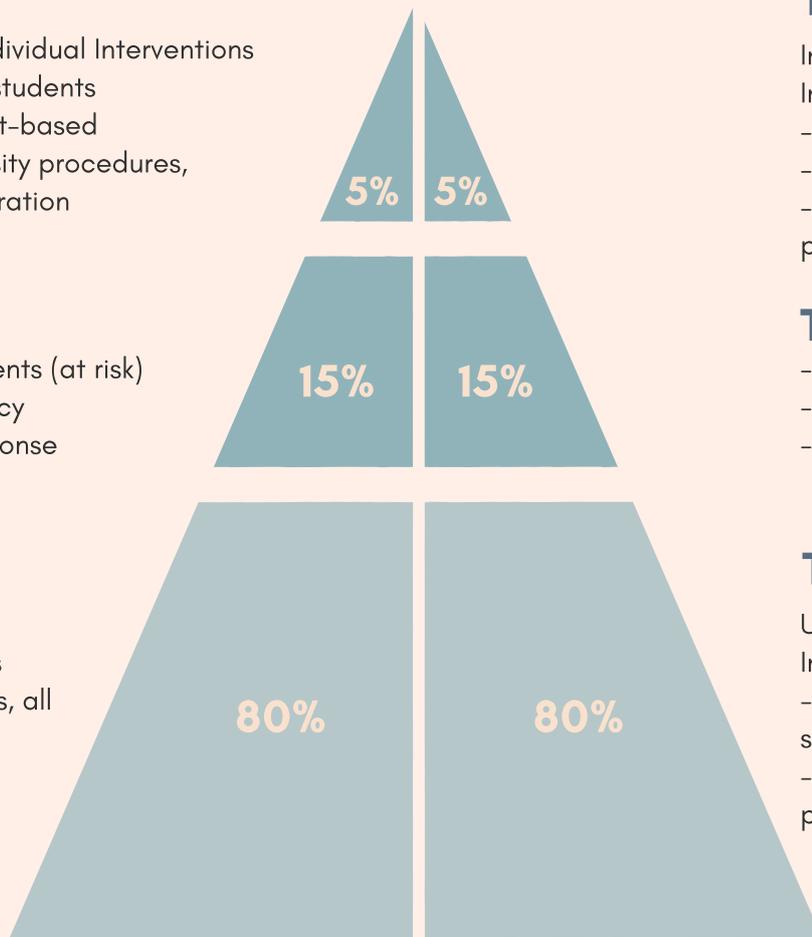
-Some students (at risk)

- High Efficacy
- Rapid Response

Tier 1

Universal Interventions

- All students, all settings
- Preventive, proactive



Tier 3

Intensive, Individual Interventions

- Individual students
- Assessment-based
- Intense, durable procedures

Tier 2

-Some students (at risk)

- High Efficacy
- Rapid Response

Tier 1

Universal Interventions

- All students, all settings
- Preventive, proactive



The Mustard Seed Programme is very much relevant to the Response to Intervention (RTI) that is widely used in the United States. The RTI takes into account different academic and behavioral types present in the school curriculum. It provides a systematic, and appropriate intensive assistance to students who are at risk or are already under-performing as compared to their grade or age-level counterparts.² Specifically, the Mustard Seed Programme caters to the top two tiers of the RTI where students need individualized support surrounding their unique learning difficulties. It aims at achieving this through key focus areas and intensive remediation.

¹ Response to Intervention Three - Tier Model of School Support. (2007). Retrieved May 15, 2018, from [http://www.dublin.k12.tx.us/cms/lib/TX21000345/Centricity/Domain/22/Response to Intervention Tiers 9-7-07.pdf](http://www.dublin.k12.tx.us/cms/lib/TX21000345/Centricity/Domain/22/Response%20to%20Intervention%20Tiers%209-7-07.pdf)

² Grosche, M., & Volpe, R. J. (2013). Response-to-intervention (RTI) as a model to facilitate inclusion for students with learning and behaviour problems. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 28(3), 254-269.



REMEDICATION VS. COMPENSATION



Compensatory strategies involve modifying the individual's environment, by changing others' behaviours (e.g. teacher slows down her teaching pace; repeats instructions); providing additional support (e.g. Shadow teacher); modifying routines (e.g. sitting in front of class near the teacher), modifying tasks (e.g. simplifying complex tasks) and many more. Although it is important to implement compensatory strategies, it is imperative that remediation of the individual's core deficits is prioritized.

The areas of remediation we target include, but are not limited to:

- Facilitating the growth and function of cognitive processes (e.g. executive function, meta-cognition) so the student learns to learn
- Facilitating the ability to think and solve problems
- Improving areas of core language (e.g. vocabulary, sentence structures, grammar)
- Enhancing skills in higher level language (e.g. inferencing)
- Training in social thinking and social communication
- Improving fine and gross motor skills (e.g. handwriting, full body movement)
- Increasing ability to attend and focus on tasks
- Improving emotional regulation
- Increasing numeracy and literacy skills
- Developing self-concept and improve motivation towards academic learning
- Improving on-task behavior for table top learning
- Improving handwriting mechanics and writing fluency
- Facilitating learning of keyboarding skills
- Improving money management as part of life skills
- Facilitating learning of time management and independent study skills

Therefore, remediation targets the individual's core deficits that impact on his/her learning and social functioning. We believe that a diagnosis does not limit an individual's potential, but with proper support and timely intervention, they can achieve more and improve their quality of life.

“ Although it is important to implement compensatory strategies, it is imperative that remediation of the individual's core deficits is prioritized. ”



KEY FOCUS AREAS

The Mustard Seed Programme aims to address fundamental areas of difficulty in tandem with academic goals and functional life skills. It aims to be specially customized for the individual to ensure input that is specific, relevant and generalizable to the student's needs and contexts (e.g. home, school).

“ Growth Focused ”

This programme targets the **maximum growth potential** of the individual. We aim to foster their abilities to **learn, develop healthy social-emotional regulation, strengthen academic skills, enhance motor skills** and **cultivate a vibrant sense of self**. We do this by building on their strengths and working on areas of improvement by equipping them with fundamental skills and providing opportunities for them to practice these in various contexts.

“ Community-based Learning ”

It is immensely important that the student has ongoing connections and participation within his/her social contexts in his/her community. We integrate community-based learning that is carefully selected to enhance the individual's **social thinking** and **life skills**. These learning contexts will provide opportunities for the individual to intentionally **participate in different social environments**, as well as **increase his/her social competence** and **sense of belonging within his/her community**. We believe that intensive therapeutic input should not sacrifice social engagement; in fact, it should facilitate and empower individuals to successfully create and engage in their social networks.

“ Stimulating Cognitive Skills ”

Our team assesses the student's ability to employ cognitive strategies in his/her learning, self-regulation and planned therapy to provide students with an internal set of **'thinking tools'** to help them learn effectively. Stimulating these essential cognitive skills will center on three main facets: Input, Elaboration and Output.

- **Input:** The student learns how to focus on incoming information; systematically look for and collect relevant data; be aware of time; conserve constancies and work with more than two sources of information at a time.
- **Elaboration:** The student is equipped in knowing how to define and solve problems; search for relevant contextual clues; compare information; recall and use information; understand reality and use hypothetical thinking.
- **Output:** The student learns to consider others' points-of-view; how to persevere despite difficulties; how to pace oneself in large tasks and how to give thoughtful responses.



MUSTARD SEED

The student may benefit from having a temporary period of intensive input targeting his/her core areas of learning and development OR engage in a long-term alternative education pathway that is tailored to his/her learning and functional needs. Essentially the Mustard Seed Programme has two classifications depending on what benefits the student most.

1 Day Programme

The Day Programme is tailored to fit the learning and remediation needs of the individual. This programme is suitable for individuals who have not been accepted into a school system due to various difficulties (including behavioral issues), but who continue to require educational and therapeutic input. The aim for these students may be to re-integrate into a school setting upon meeting the goals (and thus possess the fundamental skills) of the programme. The programme is also suitable for individuals who may take a more vocational (i.e. non-academic) path in the future. The programme focuses on building their capacities for functional life skills (e.g. self-care, basic literacy and numeracy skills for everyday tasks), so they can become more independent in their day-to-day lives.

2 Partial Integration

The Partial Integration Programme is a part-time programme that allows individuals to still be part of their current school system, whilst focusing more intensively on strengthening the core areas mentioned previously. This programme is a highly collaborative one that involves planning with the student, their family, the school and our team to create comprehensive and individualized goals to maximize the opportunities at school, whilst targeting the core skill areas at our Centre.



PROGRAMME OUTLINE

1a Day Programme

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
9:00 AM	Speech Therapy: Social Thinking and Language	Occupational Therapy: Co-regulation	Speech Therapy: Core Language Goals	Occupational Therapy: Executive Function	Speech Therapy: Higher-Level Language Goals
10:00 AM	Educational Therapy: Functional Curriculum	Educational Therapy: Language Goals	Educational Therapy: Problem Solving	Educational Therapy: Feuerstein	Educational Therapy: Dynamic Thinking
11:00 AM	Extension Work (Independent)	Extension Work (Independent)	Extension Work (Independent)	Extension Work (Independent)	Extension Work (Independent)
12:00 PM	LUNCH				
1:00 PM	Functional Curriculum				
2:00 PM	Functional Curriculum				
3:00 PM	Functional Curriculum				

★ This is an example schedule, the student's schedule will be tailored according to his/her abilities, and which programmes best benefit their needs.





PROGRAMME OUTLINE

1b Day Programme

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
9:00 AM	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
9:30 AM	Executive Function Tasks (Group)	Self-Regulation Tasks (Group)	Executive Function Tasks (Group)	Self-Regulation Tasks (Group)	Executive Function Tasks (Group)
10:00 AM	Language Arts (Group)	Language Arts (Group)	Language Arts (Group)	Language Arts (Group)	Language Arts (Group)
11:00 AM	Educational Therapy (Individual)	Occupational Therapy (Individual)	Language Therapy (Joint)	Educational Therapy (Individual)	Language Therapy (Joint)
12:00 PM	LUNCH				



2 Partial Integration

	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI
9:00 AM	Attends School	Attends School	Attends School	Morning Meeting	Morning Meeting
9:30 AM				Self-Regulation Tasks (Group)	Executive Function Tasks (Group)
10:00 AM				Language Arts (Group)	Language Arts (Group)
11:00 AM				Educational Therapy (Individual)	Language Therapy (Joint)
12:00 PM				LUNCH	

★ This is an example schedule, the student's schedule will be tailored according to his/her abilities, and which programmes best benefit their needs.



EXAMPLE CLIENT PROFILES



Name: Logan, 14-year-old

Diagnosis: Moderate-severe Autism Spectrum Disorder

Logan was diagnosed with moderate-severe Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) at 3 years of age. He has been receiving speech-language and occupational therapy twice a week ever since. Although Logan has made gains in terms of his speech and language, as well as gross motor skills (e.g. walking), he continues to have considerable difficulties expressing emotions, communicating socially and executing fine motor tasks (e.g. writing). He has difficulties comprehending the subtleties of language (e.g. jokes) and at a more fundamental level, has deficits in his core language, thus restricting his vocabulary repertoire, grammar (e.g. difficulties with sentence structures), literacy (i.e. difficulties with reading and spelling) and semantic knowledge (e.g. understanding the meanings of words).

It appears, that even with the ongoing therapeutic interventions, he has hit a plateau in his progress and is struggling to keep up with the demands of the academic curriculum, despite being held back for the second time in his grade level. This remains the case despite having an altered curriculum and teacher aide assistance 4 days per week for an hour each session. His parents and teachers are concerned about Logan's long-term prospects, especially regarding what he will do when he leaves school.



Name: Zachary, 9-year-old

Diagnosis: Global Developmental Delay

Zachary was diagnosed with Global Developmental Delay at birth. His recent IQ scores put him in the 1st percentile for his age group. He has severe speech and language disorders, affecting his ability to articulate his words, comprehend and express his needs adequately and communicate socially with adults and peers alike. Zachary also has gross and fine motor difficulties, affecting his handwriting skills, walking patterns and ability to carry out self-care routines (e.g. dress himself). He has a tailored curriculum in school and receives teacher aide assistance 3 times per week for 30 minutes each session. This arrangement has been in place for about 1 year, but Zachary does not seem to be making any significant progress in his learning, although he seems quite content and remains an amiable person to everyone. His parents, teachers and therapy team, recently, discussed his Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for the next quarter and the goals appear to be the same as the last 2 quarters, as Zachary has not made significant progress in any of the areas. His parents are considering alternative pathways for him and their main aim is for him to gain more independence as he grows up.



EXAMPLE CLIENT PROFILES



Name: Julia, 12-year-old

Diagnosis: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Julia has a diagnosis of ADHD – predominantly inattentive sub-type. Consequently, she struggles to pay attention in class and to everyday learning opportunities, resulting in poor understanding of the academic curriculum, decreased perception of social expectations (e.g. talking whilst others are talking) and continual ‘behavioral’ problems (e.g. not following the teacher’s instructions). Speech and language assessments revealed that Julia has a severe language disorder (e.g. severe deficits in vocabulary repertoire; poor sentence constructions; poor comprehension of abstract academic content), dyscalculia (i.e. learning disability involving Math) and dyslexia (i.e. learning disability affecting literacy skills), which impacts on her ability to comprehend the increasingly complex academic content and affected her ability to understand and express herself adequately with her peers. She also has poor executive functioning skills, which affects her ability to plan and organize herself adequately to complete tasks.

Her teacher reported that she often ‘daydreams’ in class or will become distracted with a completely unrelated tasks (e.g. sharpening her pencils while she was explaining an assignment) and she appears to be getting into more conflicts with others, especially in group-based work. Julia is receiving some tuition for English, Math and Science, but does not seem to be improving in her abilities and has even, failed some of the recent tests. Her parents and teachers are concerned that Julia does not seem to be making progress and in fact, seems to be regressing in her learning. Julia also seems to be increasingly frustrated and upset with herself and others.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What is the timeframe required for this programme?

Remediation and capacity building takes time, especially if the student is already 'falling behind' in his/her academic journey and is lacking the fundamental skills to learn effectively. In therapy, skills are broken down into incremental steps to help the student gain mastery and goals are frequently reviewed and updated as the individual's profile changes. Therefore, for those in the Partial Integration programme, we recommend a minimum of one year, during which, specific goals and skill areas will be intensively targeted to help facilitate the student's re-integration into an appropriate school setting. For those undertaking an alternative curriculum (akin to homeschooling) in the Day Programme, the duration may extend beyond the year and further considerations will be made on a year by year basis.

2. How will I know if the student is suitable for this programme?

Conventional school systems may not fit into everyone's learning needs. Students who would suit this programme has typically tried different school settings without satisfactory outcomes. Typically we see the following:

- The student is not learning optimally in a school and requires a shadow support for longer than one semester
- The student has a learning gap that is more than two years below his academic grade level
- The student is deemed too high functioning to be placed in a special school and yet is not meeting criteria for grade level work at his age in a mainstream school;
- The student has a predisposed condition that makes self-regulation difficult, resulting in behavioural issues and unpleasant situations with peers, academic staff and family members
- The student has been consistently considered a "gifted underachiever"
- The student requires a specially tailored curriculum to maximise his potential

3. How do I know if the student requires the Partial Integration or the Day Programme at the Centre?

The option for Partial Integration is possible if collaboration has been made with our team and the school that is concerned. Typically, the school and our team will liaise closely to work out a solution. This may result in a solution that involves the student spending a certain number of hours per day at the Center (to receive therapeutic intervention) and the rest of the hours will be at school. The Day Programme will be relevant if the student is currently not enrolled in a school and you are seeking an unique programme to maximise his/her potential.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

4. If I choose the Partial Integration route, will the student be able to integrate into his regular school?

The aim of the Partial Integration Programme is to help facilitate the student's re-integration to school if possible. For this reason, our team collaborates closely with the school's team to design a solution that best fits the student. We have had success in helping past clients successfully re-integrate into appropriate school settings after intensive intervention with the Partial Integration Programme or Day Programme. However, it is important to note that for some individuals, re-integration into a regular school may not be a viable option, as the mainstream curriculum may not be suitable to their learning abilities. In such acute cases, an alternative curriculum or placement in another school setting may be more appropriate for the student.

5. If I choose Partial Integration, how do you integrate the school's curriculum with yours?

Intensive therapy in the Partial Integration Programme aims to remediate core learning deficits alongside selected academic goals, which are deemed appropriate and attainable for the individual. Our team and the school's team will devise an Individualized Educational Plan for the student, whereby opportunities to practice his/her developing skills (e.g. cognitive, language, self-regulation) will be provided to ensure that the skills learnt in therapy are generalized to the school context. For example, therapy targeting auditory discrimination and phonological awareness may include key words and reading texts from the academic curriculum or language therapy may include unpacking the 'hard-to-grasp' concepts in Science and making meaning of new vocabularies in English.

6. I am uncertain whether if I were to take this route that if I am indeed maximising the potential of my student. It seems too unconventional.

The programmes we are providing are akin to the homeschooling model of education. Parents of students with different learning abilities are, increasingly, looking at such alternative options to help their students achieve their best through individually tailored curricula and are reporting success and satisfaction beyond what they had been able to attain whilst in school. The added benefit of our programmes is that therapeutic interventions are incorporated into the individual's learning to remediate many of the core skill deficits (e.g. cognitive, social-emotional regulation), which enables him/her to become a better learner and thinker rather than simply memorizing/regurgitating curricula content without understanding. In more recent times, education leaders around the world are realizing that the traditional school model is not suitable for maximizing the potential of the diverse population of learners. Therefore, it is imperative for parents to consider alternative education models for the student to prevent them from perpetually 'falling through the cracks' at school.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

7. Will taking the student out of school negatively impact on his ability to make friends?

Research into social attachment show that development of meaningful social relationships begins with strong parent-child dyadic interactions. Students learn how to navigate the social world through these adult-guided interactions, where they learn how to co-regulate, share attention and engage in meaningful communication before they learn to interact with peers. Therefore, if the student ranks poorly in their interactions with the significant adults in their lives, they are likely to also do poorly with peer interactions. Thus, simply placing them in a mainstream school setting will not automatically increase their social abilities. To grow in these abilities, they will require focused work on strengthening the earlier developmental social milestones through adult-guided relationships in smaller, more intimate settings – our work focuses on these key areas.

Nevertheless, it is immensely important that the student has ongoing connections and participation within his/her social contexts. Each individualized programme involves community-based learning that is carefully selected to enhance the individual's social thinking and life skills. These learning contexts will provide opportunities for the individual to intentionally participate in different social environments, as well as increase his/her social competence and sense of belonging within his/her communities. We believe that intensive therapeutic input should not sacrifice social engagement; in fact, it should facilitate and empower individuals to successfully create and engage in their social networks.

8. Will the student be able to learn the same curriculum as his/her peers in school?

It is important to understand that learning is a skill that is complex and has many facets. Learning is not simply about memorizing facts and regurgitating information, but true learning requires real understanding of the content, which involves the complex skills of reasoning, problem solving, inferencing (i.e. reading between the lines) and grasping abstract concepts. These skills are increasingly required as the curriculum becomes increasingly difficult. Therefore, remediation needs to begin at the learning stage the student is at and curriculum will need to be selected for his/her developmental level rather than age level – doing so will be more beneficial for consolidation of his/her skills and learning.



LAST TAKEAWAY

Often students fail because the curriculum fails to effectively attend to their learning needs. As a result, students "fall through the cracks" and they end up feeling unmotivated and helpless in the school curriculum. We ask that through such discouragements and worry, that parents and teachers continue to protect the student's best interest and adopt interventions that are best for them. Finding the right environment and curriculum for them to thrive and grow is important as that can re-boost self-confidence and provide them with focused attention in their weak areas.

Lastly, we ask that parents believe in the individual's potential and not yield. While learning may be insurmountable to students due to their challenges, goals can be achieved with achievable steps. Students have it in them to rise above their challenges through time.

Our team

TOTAL COMMUNICATION



CONTACT US:

Email: enquiries@totalcommunication.com.sg

Phone: 6467 2995 or 9115 8895

Fax: 6467 1004

Website: www.totalcommunication.com.sg

Address: 896 Dunearn Road #03-03A Sime Darby Centre Singapore 589472