Life coaches for life lessons?

More people are turning to life coaches for advice in their careers, studies and relationships

The 41-year-old, who was previously a psychologist at Raffles Institution, adds: “If you give them human empathy, that is a self-help book can’t. And people want a neutral, objective person with no interest at stake to guide them.”

Mr Siaw says: “Sometimes, they want trained and qualified help without having a record of seeing a therapist or counsellor.”

Max L. Lim, 40, paid about $300 for a three-hour session 2½ years ago with Mr Wee to work out his grief over his mother’s death. The mother of a three-year-old boy says: “It was money well spent for me because I could move forward rather than dwell on unhappy feelings.”

Still, Singapore Management University’s assistant professor of psychology William Tow warns: “The appeal of life coaching has to do with its promise and ability to motivate and inspire. That is a skill that is not necessarily taught in counselling programmes.”

“There’s nothing wrong with seeking inspiration and motivation to improve oneself, but we need to be mindful of people’s credentials.”