



# SUPPORTING MENTAL WELL-BEING AT WORK AFTER A CITY-WIDE CRISIS

The recent fire in Hong Kong has deeply affected our city. Even if your employees were not directly impacted, they may still be experiencing emotional distress, grief, anxiety, or helplessness. As an organization, you have a powerful role to play in helping people feel seen, supported, and safe. Here are some key steps workplaces can take now:

## Immediate actions

### Establish a communication plan.



Connect with employees to confirm their safety and assess their support needs. Be prepared to assist displaced staff.

### Provide immediate financial assistance

Activate an emergency fund to help cover urgent needs like housing, essentials, or transport.

**Offer paid time off or flexible work options.** Help employees manage emergencies, housing, or family care.

**Organize and share resources.** Create a list of essential services — shelters, hotlines, government aid.



### Provide alternative work arrangements.

Offer access to remote workspaces or quiet areas in the office.

## Mental and Emotional Support

### Promote confidential mental health services.

Highlight your EAP and encourage use of free, confidential support.

### Arrange crisis counselling.

Offer on-site sessions or group debriefings with qualified counsellors. Contact CMHA HK for information or the Chinese YMCA and Hong Kong Red Cross.

### Remind managers to remain empathetic

Encourage respectful check-ins without pressure to share. Empathy matters.

### Inform staff of external support channels.

Make sure employees know about other mental health resources in Hong Kong, such as the Samaritans hotline, to ensure they can find help outside of work.



## Long-term and Ongoing Support

### Continue regular check-ins with employees

Recovery from trauma is a long process and not linear. Continue to check in with employees and be patient as they readjust to routine. Support needs will evolve over time.

### Maintain open communication about policies

Be transparent about benefits, flexibility, and support options.

### Recognise and support diverse needs.

Some employees may be more deeply affected than others or have limited support. Adjust your support to address their needs.

### Encourage community and connection

Facilitate positive conversations and social connections. Reinforcing a sense of community can help employees rebuild and regain control.



# SUPPORTING MENTAL WELL-BEING AT WORK AFTER A CITY-WIDE CRISIS: COMMUNICATION TIPS

## 1. Share a brief internal message acknowledging the tragedy.

Express empathy and compassion.

Avoid silence, it can feel like denial or dismissal.

## 2. Normalise Emotional Responses

Let your staff know that it's normal to feel upset, distracted, tired, or overwhelmed after such events. Remind them:

- They are not alone.
- Their responses are valid.
- It's okay to ask for help or support.

## 3. Remind & Expand Access to Mental Health Resources

Re-share your EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) or counselling offerings.

Consider offering a short group debrief, mindfulness session, or optional check-in space. If you don't have internal services, consider partnering with local NGOs or helplines temporarily.

## 4. Equip Managers to Support Their Teams

Brief your leadership and people managers on how to check in empathetically.

Encourage them to lead with presence and humanity, not just performance metrics.

### What can you say as a manager?

- How are you feeling today, really?"
- "Is there anything I can do to support you right now?"
- "Would you like to take a break or talk?"
- "Please take the time you need. We're here for you."
- "You don't need to talk about it if you're not ready, but know that support is available."
- "If you're struggling with anything, even if it's not work-related, let me know how I can help."

