



CMHA HK FACTSHEET

MENTAL HEALTH STORYTELLING CAMPAIGNS AND STRATEGY FOR ORGANISATIONS IN ASIA

Storytelling is a powerful tool to break down stigma and open up conversations around mental health. It also supports Standard 3 of the **CMHA HK Guide to Thriving at Work**, to foster a culture of openness and inclusivity in the workplace.

This factsheet provides an overview of some storytelling strategy tips and considerations in order to support your research and planning efforts around this topic. Also included is a current (as of April 2021) summary of existing storytelling resources and campaigns available in the region.

This resource follows a CMHA HK member-only workshop where three experts shared their global perspectives around this topic. We would like to thank our experts for their time and input into both the workshop and this resource.



Important factors to take into account when considering implementing storytelling initiatives

- **Campaign style:** consider your organisation's objectives, how many people want to get involved and whether a campaign is aimed to be outward-facing or for internal purposes only. This will influence the scale, format and reach of the campaign.
- **Format:** will the stories be presented via video, podcast, soundbites, in writing, through photography and on which platforms.
- **Cultural sensitivities:** stigma related to mental health conversations may vary in different cultures so it's important to understand and be sensitive to this when planning a campaign with employees.
- **Support employees sharing their stories:** mental health experiences can be difficult and sensitive topics to discuss so ensure employees who are sharing their stories receive sufficient support and guidance so that they feel comfortable and confident to share their story. They should also be aware of, and comfortable with where their story will be shared and broadcast.
- **Supporting employees accessing these stories:** sensitive feelings may be triggered in listeners or readers of stories

if they have had similar lived experiences so it's important to include information on the available mental health support and resources as part of the storytelling campaign.

- **Is your organisation ready to embark on storytelling:** a safe, inclusive and effective storytelling initiative involving employees requires preparation and planning so consider whether your organisation is ready given the wider mental health strategy and, if it is, where the storytelling campaign might fit.

- **Budget:** the resources you have available for a storytelling initiative will also determine the overall scope and scale of the campaign.

“Storytelling is not a ‘nice-to-have’ but a business-critical skill – one that can be transferable to negotiation, listening and persuasion skills.” - Gian Power, Founder and CEO, TLC Lions

Existing mental health storytelling initiatives and resources



CMHA HK Storytelling Series

The CMHA HK [storytelling series](#) aims to educate, inspire and break down stigma around mental health in the workplace through the sharing of personal stories in the corporate space. Please contact us if you or someone in your organisation are interested in participating.

#ThisisMe



The [This is Me](#) campaign challenges the stigma around mental health by encouraging employees to talk openly and share their experiences. The campaign originated in the UK and is gaining traction in Asia. Depending on where your company is at on their mental health and wellbeing journey, this campaign may not be the right one to rollout internally just yet - however sharing stories from other #ThisisMe participants could be an effective way to raise awareness and normalise the conversation around mental health.

Talking Mental Walk & Talk



The [Walk & Talk initiative](#) organised by Talking Mental is to address the main issues surrounding Mental Health, which are 'Accessibility, Quality Care and Stigma'. The walk aims to provide a safe, informal environment for participants to ask experts questions and speak about Mental Health in the company of others.



Mind HK Ambassadors Programme

Mind HK's new [Ambassador programme](#), which trains individuals who have experienced a mental health problem to share their mental health stories in a safe and effective way, hopes to encourage more open dialogue about mental health in Hong Kong.



TLC Lions

Online [storytelling resources](#) are available from TLC Lions to support your organisation in encouraging open conversations around a range of mental health topics. TLC Lions have recently launched a 5-step framework titled 'The Storytelling Experience' which is a digital guide through the storytelling process by enabling individuals to understand and structure their story and to tell it in an effective way.



Storytaler

[Storytaler](#) aims to promote mental health and reduce psychiatric stigma through workshops, training and storytelling (also available in Cantonese). Members include individuals with lived experience of mental disorders and professionals trained in psychology or clinical psychology.



Hong Kong Shifts

[Hong Kong Shifts](#) works with corporates and NGOs on storytelling campaigns, events and initiatives using human-centric storytelling as a tool to build empathy and inclusion in our living and working environments. Their campaigns focus on the key themes of social inclusion, diversity, sustainability and mental health.

"Storytelling initiatives can be a great opportunity for your organisation to visibly demonstrate commitment to creating an open, supportive and inclusive work environment." -

Sakshi Kumar, Senior Manager,
Employee Wellbeing Programmes,
Community Business

Additional Reading

Here are a few resources to help individuals with sharing their story:

- [Time to Change](#)
- [Wayahead Workplaces](#)
- [Heads up](#)

Case Study: Linklaters

Gilbert Li, Partner at Linklaters, shares his thoughts on the power of storytelling within organisations and their participation in an internal #ThisisMe campaign.

Please can you share how you localised the #ThisisMe campaign for your offices in Asia?

In our experience, storytelling has been a very powerful medium. Around three years ago, we released a video at our global partners meeting, featuring partners from the London office talking about their experiences with mental health. It was well received by partners, who subsequently shared it with their teams in their own offices and facilitated discussions around it. Following that, we created a similar video featuring six senior leaders from offices in the Asia region, and I was very proud to be a part of that project. It was very impactful and helped to open the conversation around mental health.

What has been the impact of the videos?

The videos have gone a long way towards changing attitudes and perceptions around mental health. By having people in senior leadership positions share their personal stories, it normalises these experiences and demonstrates that it is possible to excel in one's career even if one experiences mental ill

"Mental health is a topic that is difficult to speak about and understand. We need to start talking about it in a relatable way." - Aaron Stadlin-Robbie, Founder and Host, Talking Mental

health. The video illustrates how the firm can support employees through difficult times by providing time off and workplace adjustments. The colleagues who shared their stories have naturally become workplace mental health champions, which has helped to open conversations about mental health in the office. The videos have been our biggest success to date and have helped to build support and momentum for other mental health initiatives.

How did you find employees who were willing to share their stories?

Our Head of Human Resources Asia at the time was a long-time employee of Linklaters and was very passionate about workplace mental health. He had developed strong working relationships with employees in the region, so he knew who may be open to sharing their stories. Without those pre-existing relationships, it would have been much more difficult to get people to volunteer to participate. Once a few senior leaders joined the project, other local leaders felt more comfortable to get behind the cause and share their stories as well.



香港城市精神健康聯盟

**City Mental Health
Alliance** HK

The City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong is a collaborative venture founded by city businesses. Championed by senior leaders, the Alliance is business led and expert guided and aims to create a culture of good mental health for workers in the city of Hong Kong, share best practice and increase mental health understanding.

CONTACT

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