



# SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF ALL EMPLOYEES

## Moderator



**Edward Moncreiffe**

CEO of HSBC Life and Chair of CMHA HK Board

The theme for the 2023 World Mental Health Day is **Mental Health is a Universal Right**. At our annual event, guest speakers and CMHA HK member representatives translated this theme into action for the workplace context. The key discussion points are summarised below.

## Panellists



**Dr Rose Ong**

APAC Medical Director, Goldman Sachs

## Why is this topic important?

The results of the most recent CMHA HK Employee Wellbeing Survey found that there was a significant decline in the mental health of administration staff. There was a four-fold increase in their reported experience of mental ill-health. This group also had the lowest utilisation rate of employer provided mental health services (68% did not use these services) and was least likely to ask for support from line managers or HR.



**Gordon Watson**

Chairman, AXA Asia

While Hong Kong companies have made great progress in bolstering mental health support for their employees, these services need to be effectively targeted and marketed to the people who need them the most and made accessible to all levels of staff within our organisations.

## CEO Viewpoint and the Role of HR



**Raymond Co**

Group Head of People & Culture, Jardine Matheson

C-suite leaders are looking for evidence-based best practices, and need to be convinced that investing in an effective mental health strategy equates to better productivity, better performance and ultimately, better business. Mental health needs to be placed firmly on the Board agenda and prioritised along with financial targets.



**Kate Wood**

Diversity, Equity and Inclusiveness Leader, Financial Services, APAC, EY

Mental health strategy cannot simply be delegated to the HR function, as leaders need to role-model behaviours and drive cultural change from the top. The function of HR is to facilitate conversations with senior leaders and help make the business case that mental health and employee wellbeing should be built into employee targets and objectives. Pulse surveys and focus groups are also useful tools to help identify challenge areas and kickstart important conversations.



**Nancy Lee**

Head of Human Resources, APAC, Schroders

**AXA's Global Mental Health Task Force** seeks to understand concerns and challenges from different employee groups across the globe to identify hot spots within the organisation and find targeted solutions.

## How to reach diverse and underserved employee groups

Workforces are inherently diverse, and organisations need to identify underserved segments to ensure that every employee has good access to quality physical and mental health services, regardless of their role or rank.

**Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)** are an effective way to reach large groups of employees with similar needs and concerns. ERGs also provide platforms for individuals to share values, discuss problem areas and work towards concrete actions.

Having a diverse group of **Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs)** also provides easier access to mental health support at different levels of the organisation. The intersectionality of the wider diversity, equity and inclusiveness (DEI) strategy and mental health, including on topics such as LGBTQ, gender equity, the female life cycle and neurodivergence, also helps to identify specific needs of employees from underserved groups.

**Schroders HK** has an ERG (Schroders Minds) dedicated to mental health, sponsored by senior leaders. It brings together employees and MHFAs from across the organisation to share challenges, raise awareness, drive initiatives and advance the mental health topic. Mental health-related resources and services (both in person and digital) beyond the Employee Assistance Programme provides a more proactive and personal support.

Workforces are increasingly multi-generational and span from soon-to-be retirees to new joiners who have had to adjust to their roles over the pandemic. Tailored support needs to be offered to cater to the different needs of, and challenges faced by, these employee groups.

Enabling employees to find a sense of belonging in the workplace is a core focus of **EY, APAC**. This includes creating psychological safety in the workplace and encouraging both good mental and physical health to ensure the sustainability of the workforce.

## The importance of good people managers

As the saying goes, people leave managers, not organisations. A lot of stress is caused by the poor working styles of line managers, which is an area that is not routinely measured. Managers are often promoted for their technical competencies, but less focus may be placed on their people competencies. Managers also need to be adept at building trust, so that employees are comfortable with having open conversations, and managers have the confidence to initiate potentially difficult conversations.

At **Jardine Matheson**, one of the People and Culture objectives is to reduce employee stress by eliminating or streamlining work processes that are unnecessary and inefficient. Managers are encouraged to reduce and evaluate work that brings no added value, such as redundant meetings and convoluted processes.

## Ensuring the accessibility of mental health services

Mental health services, including the availability of MHFAs, need to be communicated clearly and be easily accessible to employees regardless of their business function.

**Goldman Sachs HK** provides on-site resilience services to ensure that employees across the organisation have confidential access to psychologists, psychiatrists and counsellors free of charge in addition to the EAP which is available 24/7. Enhancements have been made in mental health benefit provisions for key markets to facilitate access. These are important first steps towards removing barriers to accessing quality mental health care.



香港城市精神健康聯盟

**City Mental Health  
Alliance** HK

The City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK) is a not-for-profit membership organisation. We are an alliance of businesses, working together with mental health experts and partner organisations, to achieve our vision that every workplace will protect, support and create positive mental health for their people.

We provide training, events, resources, research and practical support for companies wishing to create mentally healthy workplaces.

### CONTACT US

Website: [cmhahk.org](https://cmhahk.org)

LinkedIn: [City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong](https://www.linkedin.com/company/city-mental-health-alliance-hong-kong)