



MENTAL HEALTH IN HONG KONG WORKPLACES: SO WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT?

Moderator



Edward Moncreiffe

CEO of HSBC Life
(International) Limited

Panellists



Amy Cho

CEO, Hong Kong & Deputy
Head, Asia Pacific, Schroders



Sally Wan

CEO, Greater China, AXA



John Lee

Head of APAC International
Capital Markets, Allen & Overy

To mark World Mental Health Day, City Mental Health Alliance HK (CMHA HK) hosted its annual Senior Leader panel to discuss the importance of creating the right corporate culture to foster mentally healthy workplaces. As part of the event, CMHA HK also released this year's [Thriving at Work Assessment Results](#), which showed member companies had achieved an overall improvement of 16% across all workplace mental health standards.

The panel brought together senior leaders from the legal, financial and insurance sectors to share their insights on the approaches and guiding principles that businesses are adopting when developing and implementing their workplace mental health strategies. **Edward Moncreiffe, CEO of HSBC Life (International) Limited and Board Chair of CMHA HK**, moderated the discussion.

Constant Communication and Culture-building

While organisations have put in place mental health support systems, many employees are still unaware of how or where to seek out these resources. At a company and management level, it is “our obligation to put in place an effective facility to promote mental health awareness and support,” said **Amy Cho, CEO, Hong Kong & Deputy Head, Asia Pacific, Schroders**.

The panellists agreed that awareness-building and de-stigmatisation efforts should be constant throughout the year, and should not just be a concentrated effort for events such as World Mental Health Day. Given that the Hong Kong workforce spends the majority of their week at the workplace, it is crucial to continuously cultivate an open and supportive environment that enables employees to thrive.

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach, “continuous trial and error is inevitable as we attempt to find the best solution and strategy to support employees at a personalised level,” noted **Sally Wan, CEO, Greater China, AXA**. Wan added that it is important to raise the mental health literacy and awareness of all staff members to create a culture of openness and support.

From Global to Local

Mental health is a global systemic challenge. While many multinational corporations have introduced mental health and sustainability policies globally, it is essential for regional offices to implement these policies in a way that addresses specific local challenges.

At Schroders, while it is a priority to promote wellbeing as part of the global impact framework, “it should not just be a tick-the-box exercise, such policies need to be customised to teams and individuals to maximise effectiveness,” said Cho.

John Lee, Head of APAC International Capital Markets, Allen & Overy, shared that A&O has asked team members to submit suggestions on what small changes can be made to management practices to improve mental health. Some practical examples include not sending emails on a Sunday evening unless absolutely necessary, or noting in the subject heading of the email that it does not need to be dealt with urgently. These small actions, when implemented consistently by senior leaders, can have a positive knock-on effect on workplace culture.

Who’s accountable for workplace mental health?

Efforts must start from the top and filter downwards. While it takes everyone in an organisation to create a healthy workplace culture, it is the responsibility of senior management and the executive committee to set the scene and see through any mental health strategies, noted Moncreiffe. Mental health is not a topic that can simply be delegated to one specific team or business function.

Regular employee surveys and ‘pulse checks’ are carried out at AXA and Schroders, to give management a snapshot of how employees are doing and help guide the mental health agenda.

“Mental health is a key part of the ‘S’ of ESG priorities. From a business perspective, we want everyone to be healthy and performing at their highest level. A mentally healthy workplace is a critical element that contributes to the performance and success of any business,” said Lee.





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**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.

This document is not and should not be considered as clinical advice or support. Anyone who may have a need for such support should seek professional advice.