



香港城市精神健康聯盟

City Mental Health
Alliance HK

Mental Health in an Unequal World

Perspectives, Trends and Actions

Moderator



Edward Moncreiffe

CEO of HSBC Life
(International) Limited

Panellists



Sammi Cho

Chief Executive of Hong
Kong Branch, BNY Mellon



Helen Colquhoun

Partner at DLA Piper



Andrew Wong

CEO, Health & Beauty North
Asia, DFI Retail Group

To mark World Mental Health Day, City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK) hosted a virtual panel to discuss the importance of championing a mental health and wellbeing in the workplace strategy. As the impact of Covid-19 continues for a second year, workplaces have had to continuously pivot and adapt to the changing needs and priorities of their employees.

The panel brought together senior leaders from the legal, financial and retail sectors to share their challenges and outlooks, as well as their perspectives on what the #WMHD2021 theme “Mental Health in an Unequal World” means to them. **Edward Moncreiffe, CEO of HSBC Life (International) Limited and Board Chair of CMHA HK**, moderated the panel.

Key Trends: Flexibility, Openness and Trust-building

Despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic, a silver lining is that “employees are a lot more comfortable talking openly about their stresses and feelings in the workplace,” shared **Sammi Cho, Chief Executive, Hong Kong Branch, BNY Mellon**.

The effective implementation of hybrid working arrangements has helped organisations bolster operational resiliency, with companies making changes for the better by focussing on employee needs. “Organisations are finally recognising that agile working is a viable way of working. A flexible approach is key as the ideal working arrangement varies for each employee”, added **Helen Colquhoun, Partner, DLA Piper**.

The senior leaders noted that many employees often feel they need to be seen to be working late in the office, due to a lack of systemic trust in the organisation. “For hybrid working arrangements to be effective, senior management needs to place trust in their employees,” said Moncreiffe. He added that many companies have favoured a principles-based and trust-based approach over a top-down HR policy when implementing their agile working strategies, adapting to team-specific needs.

The panel agreed that it is crucial to create a safe and open platform for employees to share their concerns. **Andrew Wong, CEO, Health & Beauty North Asia, DFI Retail Group** shared that in-house psychological support has been very well received, with 93% of employees from Jardine Restaurant Group (in Myanmar) providing positive feedback.

Leading by Example

While flexible working arrangements are essential, senior leaders should be encouraged to role-model behaviours so that employees feel safe to follow their example. At BNY Mellon, Asia Pacific based teams are asked not to schedule video meetings on Friday afternoons to allow employees some extra time to catch up on work.

“Try to get as many senior leaders as possible on board to lead by example and allow the movement to gain momentum,” said Colquhoun.

At DLA Piper, partners have been invited to participate in a “sharing series” to share their personal stories on mental health challenges throughout their careers, and their journey to overcome these.

It is important to “provide a support network and continue checking in with employees, enabling people to feel that they are not alone,” added Wong.

“Mental Health in an Unequal World”: Workplace Perspectives

“A lot of women have been hit very hard during Covid, as they tend to take on more caregiving responsibilities at home. BNY Mellon has been making a conscientious effort to support female employees during this time.” – Sammi Cho, Chief Executive of Hong Kong Branch, BNY Mellon

“The DFI Retail Group participated in the ‘Walk Up Jardine House’ event across the organisation and achieved 2,747,536 steps in the two-week challenge as a way to raise donations and mental health awareness in the workplace.” – Andrew Wong, CEO, Health & Beauty North Asia, DFI Retail Group

“Work-from-home arrangements affect people differently. While some employees have the luxury of a comfortable home office, others may not. Employers should consider what support they can provide – such as equipment, allowances or co-working spaces - to support their staff and minimise these inequities.” – Helen Colquhoun, Partner, DLA Piper

“Many of the younger graduate employees stay home with family or with flatmates and may not have the space and environment to work effectively. Employers need to be conscious of what each individual needs and in what environment they work best.” – Edward Moncreiffe, CEO of HSBC Life (International) Limited and Board Chair of CMHA 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.