



香港城市精神健康聯盟

**City Mental Health**  
**Alliance** HK



# CMHA HONG KONG GUIDE TO THRIVING AT WORK

# Foreword

We are pleased to present our 'CMHA HK Guide to Thriving at Work' framework, an adaptation of the UK 'CMHA Guide: Thriving at Work'. The guide was adapted by our members to support creation of healthy workplaces within the unique environments in which companies operate in Hong Kong and the Asia Pacific region. The CMHA HK hopes that this document will support all companies to sustainably embed good mental health practice within their organisations and ensure the good mental health of all employees.

**David Cruikshank, Chairman, CMHA HK**

I want to congratulate the City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong on the launch of this Thriving at Work Guide. This guide, for the first time, provides a clear framework that will help CMHA HK members to take practical steps to develop a culture and strategy that underpins mentally healthy workplaces. Importantly, this guide firmly moves the mental health agenda in Hong Kong beyond awareness raising initiatives, to businesses taking practical steps to prevent mental health issues developing and to promote wellness of staff.

The creation of this guide is a good example of how CMHA's global programmes work and it clearly demonstrates the power of the collaboration of our global membership base. The principles of this guide were set at a global level, informed by the experiences of members, while the specifics have been shaped at a local level by local businesses, to reflect the cultural nuances of the region. I look forward to seeing how CMHA HK members adopt the standards of this guide. These experiences will then, in turn, feed back into the CMHA global picture of what good practice in the workplace looks like and drive future solutions. The mental health of the people that work in our businesses matter, and I am confident that this guide will help to drive innovation that supports it.

**Poppy Jaman, CEO, City Mental Health Alliance**

We welcome the introduction by CMHA HK of this addition to the business mental health toolkit, which will help organisations enhance their performance in this important area. This will help inform our strategy to encourage our people to take responsibility for their own physical and mental health, but also to guide our partners and leaders to support the health and wellbeing of every member of their teams and recognise and look out for and address the signs of ill health (both mental and physical).

**David Kidd, Partner, Linklaters**

Oliver Wyman is proud to have played a role in adapting the Thriving at Work guide for the Hong Kong market. We are passionate about fostering a culture in which people are supported and feel encouraged to bring their whole selves to work. If the Guide helps even one person in Hong Kong either inside Oliver Wyman or in the wider Hong Kong business community, feel safe to come forward and address their mental health in the workplace, then we consider our efforts are a success.

**Kirsty Hill, Head of Talent Management – APR, Oliver Wyman**

The CMHA HK wishes to acknowledge the support of our partner organisations, including Mind Hong Kong.

**Dr. Lucy Lord, Co-Chair of Mind Hong Kong** said: 'We are excited that a document designed to help the creation of healthy workplaces and tailored to the unique working environment of Hong Kong has been produced. We look forward to working together and using this Guide to ensure that workplaces across all of Hong Kong are able to promote and support good mental health and ensure that everyone is able to access mental health support.'

We are grateful to the members of the CMHA HK for their contribution. In particular we wish to thank J.P. Morgan, Linklaters LLP and Oliver Wyman for their work and support on the document.

# Background

This Guide is intended as a reference to support companies in ensuring that their workplaces are healthy environments in which good working practices are embedded.

The document is based on a version originally developed by members of the City Mental Health Alliance (the “**CMHA**”) in the United Kingdom (the “**UK**”). The UK document followed recommendations from CMHA research and an independent UK review into how employers can better support the mental health of people in employment. It provided a framework of actions that large City corporates were able to implement to support their employees.

In recognition of the unique working environment of Hong Kong and Asia Pacific, members of the CMHA in Hong Kong (the “**CMHA HK**”) from across the legal, financial and professional services industries have worked together to adapt the UK version of the Guide and create this Hong Kong document.



# How to Use this Tool

This Guide provides a framework that companies can use to support the good mental health of their employees. It presents six standards, and identifies which practices and interventions within each standard CMHA HK views as 'Committed', 'Achieving', 'Excelling' or 'Enhanced' with general principles and ambitious targets.

To support companies as they use this Guide and to highlight areas of best practice, 'hints and tips' are provided where possible. In addition, helpful resources from within Hong Kong and globally have been included, although this is not an exhaustive list and there are many additional resources online. Efforts to create mentally healthy workplaces will likely require the support of a team and different areas of work across the company. Teams and individuals may need to receive training to ensure successful implementation of a mental health strategy.

It is recognised that every organisation has a unique culture, environment and make-up of employees. This Guide has been purposely developed so that it

can be used by a wide range of companies varying in size and nature. It is also anticipated that implementation of standards may not happen in a linear fashion, rather, it will depend on the company and its unique needs. Companies should consider in their planning that implementing a mental health strategy is anticipated to take between 18 months or longer.

Careful consideration should be given at the outset to monitoring and tracking the success of the strategy, ensuring it is meeting objectives and can be improved as required. Consideration should also be given at the start to the structure of the company at a local, regional or global level and how resources such as internal communications can best be utilised.

For members of the CMHA HK, this Guide is also accompanied by an assessment tool to support companies in the strategy implementation process.

Finally, the CMHA HK believes that mental health is on a continuum and may fluctuate depending on multiple

factors. This Guide is designed to support companies in the process of creating workplaces that facilitate and promote good mental health, help to prevent mental ill health, and are able to support employees who experience mental ill health.

We recognise that mental health, wellbeing and mental ill health are not simply workplace issues. We encourage companies to consider the implications of good mental health and mental ill health not just within the workplace, but across the wider community.

This Guide is intended to be a 'living document' meaning CMHA HK will continue to revise and update the tool as we gain understanding from how standards are implemented, and how innovations in workplace wellbeing inform future learning. Feedback for future improvement is welcomed.



## STANDARD 1A

### Develop mental health at work strategy

Develop a mental health at work strategy that promotes good mental health of all employees and outlines the support available for those who may need it



#### Committed

Carry out an assessment of what support is currently available in your company for those who may need it (e.g. an employee assistance program (“EAP”), a nominated person in human resources (“HR”), and what additional support might be required – **refer to standard**

**2 for examples**

Write a strategy that promotes the good mental health of all your employees and outlines the support available in your company for those who may need it – **see resources list for supportive documents**

Ensure that senior management are aware of the business case for the strategy

Consider what indicators of success will be required for your company to monitor the success of the strategy implementation – **refer to standard 6 for examples**



#### Achieving

Demonstrate senior level responsibility by ensuring senior management are supportive of the strategy and what will be required to implement it



#### Excelling

Nominate a dedicated health and wellbeing lead at the senior management level

#### Hints and tips:

Review the company Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This could involve an assessment of what provision is made to support staff with mental health related concerns e.g. what support is accessible, how many sessions are provided and by whom (counsellor/psychologist/psychiatrist etc.), are sessions in-person or on the telephone.

In addition, consider practicalities such as the language EAP services are provided in, what other services are provided by EAP (non mental health related) and whether the EAP is provided for the employee or the whole family.

It is also important to understand utilisation and whether staff are aware of the service, and know how to access it. Companies may wish to consider speaking with staff/HR teams to understand employee experiences of EAP programs in further detail.





## STANDARD 1B

### Implement mental health at work strategy

Consider the steps and resources needed and implement your mental health at work strategy



#### Committed

Ensure the capacity and internal capability of your HR and relevant teams for the development and delivery of your strategy



#### Achieving

Identify, source and provide mental health training to individuals to implement your strategy to ensure that they have the skills and knowledge to implement your strategy effectively



#### Excelling

Identify mental health champions or mentors as role models to promote relevant support mechanisms and strategies



#### Enhanced

Demonstrate accountability by ensuring that a nominated health and wellbeing lead at the senior management level has clear reporting duties and responsibilities. These could include:

- Visible leadership involvement in social gatherings/events for leaders to meet and share best practice
- Ensuring that mental health and wellbeing is on the agenda at your company's senior management meetings on a regular basis
- Ensuring mental health is included on the agenda when meeting both internal and external business leaders



# STANDARD 1C

## Communicate mental health at work strategy

Communicate your mental health at work strategy so that all employees are aware of your company's commitment and the support available for those who may need it



### Committed

Communicate your mental health at work strategy to all your employees and outline the support for those who may need it

Develop and communicate factsheets on health and wellbeing support provided by your company, and information about keeping healthy

#### Hints and tips:

When implementing the strategy, consider leveraging local resources and internal communications. Ensure that the messages are consistent and repeated to enhance messaging.

#### Hints and tips:

See appendix for some resources that may be helpful to help produce the strategy and factsheets. Resources are often provided by specialist companies as well as NGOs, government organisations and health insurance providers



### Achieving

Provide mental health awareness sessions to all your employees to raise awareness and improve understanding of mental health

Produce an internal and external narrative which aligns to your recruitment processes, employee competency frameworks and culture or values, potentially as part of a broader wellbeing plan



### Excelling

Use case studies and mental health champions or mentors, where appropriate, as role models to raise awareness and improve understanding of mental health and to promote relevant support mechanisms and strategies

Tailor communications about your mental health at work strategy to suit different audiences (e.g. senior management, HR, resource groups, employees) and align to their priorities



### Enhanced

Make a public statement of your commitment to mental health, what your company is doing in this area and how this fits into your organisation's overall strategy. This could include:

- A statement of your company's commitment and progress in the annual report or other communications
- An acknowledgement of your company's commitment in company recruitment and career information
- Making use of relevant indices and comparators to evaluate and report on your company's performance

#### Hints and tips:

Consider the language required for communication and information – staff may prefer to receive information in another language. For example, it may be helpful to consider provision of factsheets in Simplified or Traditional Chinese, and awareness sessions to be conducted in Cantonese, Mandarin and/or English.



## STANDARD 2

### Increase awareness and support

**Continue to develop mental health awareness among employees in your company and continue to make information, tools and support accessible**



#### Committed

Ensure mental health and wellbeing information, in particular signposting to internal and external sources of support, is easily accessible through a variety of means e.g. desk drops, website, emails, posters and screensavers

Include information to raise awareness that mental health is not just a workplace issue that affects employees but is affected by many factors. Information should also cover the fact that anyone in the community can experience mental ill health at any given

Use existing campaigns (e.g. World Mental Health Day, 'This is Me' and the Green Ribbon campaign) and resources to raise awareness of mental health

#### Hints and tips:

Resources can be found in the appendix for information on mental health outside of the workplace



#### Achieving

Deliver bespoke culturally appropriate mental health awareness campaigns in your company

During the induction process for new employees, share information about your company's commitment to mental health along with related resources, tools and support



#### Excelling

Ask senior leaders to cascade information related to raising mental health awareness and promoting the support available to all employees. Senior leaders should also encourage staff to attend events or training related to mental health

Target other life-time events and potential stress points (e.g. new parents, relocation and looking after elderly relatives) with tailored mental health awareness information



#### Enhanced

Ensure the provision of tailored, qualified and culturally appropriate in-house and external mental health support and access to preventive and early interventions for individuals experiencing mental health issues, preferably through self-referral. This may include:

- Digital support
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Online resources
- Employer-purchased occupational health services
- Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)
- Medical insurance benefits (with adequate support for mental health within their premiums)
- (On-site) counsellor
- Psychological support
- Offsite services
- Primary care/family doctor
- Onward referral to specialist services





## STANDARD 3

### Foster a culture of openness and inclusivity

**Foster a culture of openness and inclusivity, encouraging open conversations around supporting good employee mental health as well as mental-ill health and the support available if needed**



#### Committed

Create space for employees to get to know each other outside of the work environment e.g. off-sites, work social events and brown bag lunches



#### Achieving

Encourage employee-led sharing with informal and formal employee sharing of stories via channels such as blogs, social media, radio, intranet and video

Encourage/offer confidential discussions between individuals, managers, employers and relevant experts (e.g. HR, Occupational Health and other medical service providers) about mental health issues and what reasonable adjustments may be necessary for

Use informal networking groups, resource groups and internal sessions (e.g. 'lunch & learn' sessions), to encourage open conversations about mental health in your company

Implement a detailed training plan for mental health inclusivity and support skills training. This may include mental health skills and wellbeing training for managers, HR professionals and wider staff



#### Excelling

Encourage colleagues who have disclosed mental ill-health to provide feedback on their experience

Use tools to develop tailored recovery and resilience plans (e.g. a Wellness Recovery Action Plan or similar) for returners and those with diagnosed mental health

Implement a detailed training plan for mental health inclusivity and support skills training across other areas of the organisation. This may include:

- Disability/mental health awareness training for recruitment interviewers including graduate schemes
- Return to work mental health training for line managers to enable them to integrate individuals back into their teams for effective and successful return to work

#### Hints and tips:

Examples of tools for development of Wellness Action Plan/Wellness Recovery Action Plans can be found in the appendix.



#### Enhanced

Improve all employees' understanding of the process of disclosing mental ill health, considering the advantages and disadvantages of disclosure and creating an environment where employees feel safe to disclose. Strategies to ensure this include:

- Putting in place an anonymous disclosure processes e.g. questions relating to mental health and/or inclusion are included in employee questionnaires, engagement surveys, equal opportunity forms and pre- and post-recruitment questionnaires
- Involving experts (e.g. HR, Occupational Health and other medical services) in the disclosure process
- Ensuring there is an opportunity for disclosure and open conversation during recruitment and induction (e.g. provision of confidential Wellness Action Plans)
- Regularly monitoring any adjustments that are made for individuals and offer ongoing health assessments for those individuals



## STANDARD 4

### Ensure a healthy working environment

**Provide employees with good working conditions and ensure they have a healthy work life balance**



#### Committed

Raise awareness within your company of unhealthy workplace risks (e.g. stress, long hours and bullying) and support employees to mitigate those risks

Ask your senior leaders to role-model healthy behaviours including taking regular breaks throughout the day, using their vacation and facilitating others to do the same

#### Hints and tips:

Role modelling behaviours can be extended into the wider team. For example, managers can ensure workload is appropriate and allows for breaks and rest periods, emails out of office hours to be discouraged etc.



#### Achieving

Implement a resilience and wellbeing programme to raise awareness of a healthy work life balance

Identify and take action on hotspots where workplace conditions are potentially harmful to mental health

Work with a variety of internal partners (e.g. HR and your internal communications team) and external suppliers to ensure healthy living is encouraged. Ways to do this include promoting:

- Healthy eating and exercise campaigns
- Wellbeing and resilience resources (e.g. stress management, time management, mindfulness)

Have a flexible working policy where appropriate and technology that supports this, giving access to formal and informal flexibility where feasible (dependent on job role), to promote a healthy work life balance



#### Excelling

Identify ways of tackling and measuring presenteeism



## STANDARD 5

### Promote effective people management

**Promote effective people management to ensure all employees have a regular conversation about their health and wellbeing with their line manager, supervisor or organisational leader and train and support line managers and supervisors in effective management practices**



#### Committed

Provide support for line managers to feel confident in having regular conversations about health and wellbeing with their direct reports, which may include:

- Advice line
- Managers' guide
- HR support
- Education about the support that is available for staff such as EAP

#### Hints and tips:

Managers should be aware that family, friends and home dynamics may affect performance and presentation at work. In addition, work related issues may have an effect on employees outside of work and affect personal time and social relationships.



#### Achieving

Offer a range of mental health training for line managers in a variety of ways to address different learning styles (e.g. webinars, bespoke, flexible), such as:

- Training on mental health awareness
- Training on Mental Health First Aid
- Embedded wellbeing training in management level training
- Training on having difficult conversations



#### Excelling

Formalise/raise awareness of the expectation that all line managers discuss wellbeing and workplace risks with their direct reports



## STANDARD 6

### Measure your success

**Use available data, including employee feedback, to support your strategy's implementation and continuous improvement**



#### Committed

Review available data such as anecdotal and anonymous information from line managers, data from HR teams and EAP/insurance information (e.g. number of claims), to assess what data is available and how it can be used to support strategy implementation

Identify what other data should be collected to monitor and track the success of your mental health at work strategy (e.g. CMHA HK survey, organisational and employee engagement surveys, traffic to internal wellbeing page, anecdotal feedback and exit interviews)



#### Achieving

Collect data and use the data collected to continuously review and revise your mental health at work strategy, and implement any changes necessary



#### Excelling

Include mental health and wellbeing data in reporting to senior management and use this to engage senior management in a discussion on the overall mental health and wellbeing strategy and its continuous improvement

#### Hints and tips:

Consider how staff can be involved in the review and feedback process to continually improve e.g. use networking groups to provide feedback on ease of use of mental health policy and if it can be easily found on the intranet/internal systems. Ensure open channels of communication with staff to encourage honest feedback.

# Resources



# International Resources

## Beyond Blue (Australia)

Creating a mentally health workplace:  
A guide for business leaders and  
managers

## Beyond Blue (Australia)

Seven actions to create a mentally  
healthy workplace

## Black Dog Institute (Australia)

Mental health toolkit

## Bupa (UK)

Setting up a Wellness Action Plan

## Business in the Community (UK)

Mental health toolkit for employers

## CMHA (UK)

CMHA Thriving at Work Guide

## Lord Mayor's Office, London

Information on The Green Ribbon  
Campaign

## Lord Mayor's Office, London

Information on the This Is Me  
awareness campaign

## Mental Health Commission of Canada

A practical toolkit to help employers  
build an inclusive workforce

## Mental Health Commission of Canada

Psychological health and safety: An  
action guide for employers

## Mental Health Foundation of New Zealand

Five ways to wellbeing at work toolkit

## Mind UK (UK Charity)

Collection of multiple resources on  
workplace mental health

## RUOK (Australia)

How to ask RUOK? at work: A practical  
guide for the workplace

## Stevenson Farmer Review (UK)

Review of mental health and  
employers

## World Health Organisation

Mental health policies and  
programmes in the workplace

These resources are illustrative only, not necessarily endorsed by CMHA HK and not intended to be used as the sole source of information.

# Hong Kong Resources

## CMHA HK

Cost of mental ill health in Hong Kong  
心理健康問題為香港僱主帶來的成本

## CMHA HK

Toolkit on legal considerations

## Food and Health Bureau, Hong Kong Government

Mental health review report

## GovHK

Mental health

## Mind HK (Charity)

Source of information on mental health and service provision in English and Simplified and Traditional Chinese

## The Mental Health Association of Hong Kong

Information and services for mental health in Hong Kong

These resources are illustrative only, not necessarily endorsed by CMHA HK and not intended to be used as the sole source of information.

# About the City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong

## What is the City Mental Health Alliance (CMHA)?

The CMHA is a membership organisation that works with senior leaders in large businesses, typically from the financial, legal, professional services and technology sector, to help transform workplaces into mentally healthy environments.

Established in 2017, the City Mental Health Alliance in Hong Kong (the “**CMHA HK**”) exists and operates within the global principles of the CMHA, but its approach is specifically adapted to the Hong Kong market and business needs. CMHA HK currently has 18 member organisations from the legal, financial and professional services industries as well as from the insurance and public relations sectors.

## What does the CMHA HK do?

The CMHA HK works hand in hand with members, at leadership and operational levels, to facilitate change and embed good mental health practice within workplaces in a sustainable and measurable way.

It does this via a three-step process:

### 1. Socialising mental health into the business

– e.g. increasing understanding of mental health, challenging any stigma and fostering a culture of openness within a workplace.

### 2. Developing the skills and mental health literacy of all our members’ employees, from board level to early careers

– e.g. providing all employees with the appropriate language and confidence to talk about mental health, as well as facilitating training and sharing best practice around necessary skills and proven interventions.

### 3. Sustaining and embedding the transformation

– e.g. helping to ensure that good mental health practice is led and owned by business leaders and becomes integrated into the business’s strategic priorities.

The CMHA is a solutions-focused organisation. Our strength lies in the unique collaboration of our members, working together to draw upon the vast pool of knowledge and experience from across business and, with guidance from our expert advisory board, to find, test and deliver solutions that work for our members.

# About the City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong

## The CMHA HK also:

- conducts research and analysis across employees, businesses and sectors;
- provides training on general mental health awareness;
- hosts and supports business-led events; and
- develops toolkits and resources in collaboration with members.

## We work with:

Senior business leaders and human resources, wellbeing and recruitment professionals in large financial, professional and technology businesses. The CMHA also works with organisations to help shape the direction of mental health in the workplace – e.g. national governments, the World Economic Forum, industry bodies, partners and relevant charities.

## Contact us

If you would like more information, or to arrange to speak with a member of our team, please visit our website [www.cmhahk.org](http://www.cmhahk.org) or email [info@cmhahk.org](mailto:info@cmhahk.org)

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