

WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH: BEST PRACTICE INITIATIVES FROM HONG KONG COMPANIES

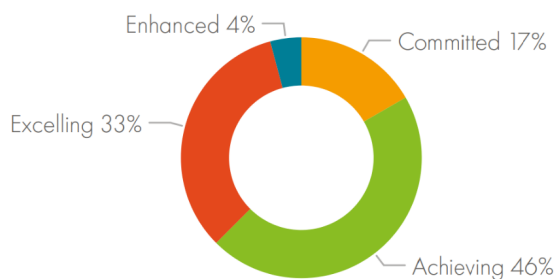
The City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong (CMHA HK) launched the **Guide to Thriving at Work** in 2019 to give Hong Kong companies a framework on which to base their development of more mentally healthy workplaces. In that same year we released the **Thriving at Work Assessment**, a survey based on the HK Guide which was completed by HR and Wellbeing leads within companies as a self-administered gap analysis of how their workplace initiatives were addressing the standards outlined in the [CMHA HK Guide to Thriving at Work](#). The Assessment has been completed by CMHA HK members every year since 2019.

The data that forms the basis of this report relies on input from our member companies who complete the survey, and we thank them for their willingness to examine and share their workplace operations and achievements and contribute to a better understanding of HK workplace practices. While the assessment is open to any company, to date only CMHA HK members have completed the survey.

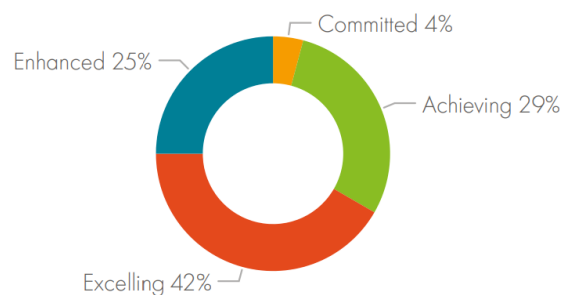
Overall results

The 2024 Thriving at Work Assessment marks the fifth year of the assessment with 89% of members completing the survey and 79% requesting a 1:1 consultation meeting to discuss their results. Quantitative measures were introduced in 2022 to enable peer comparison, and these show an overall improvement in results and an increased proportion of respondents reaching a higher level of performance. Over this period, the number of companies who reached Excelling increased from 8 to 10, while the number that reach Enhanced rose from 1 to 6.

2022



2024



Since 2021 three companies have consistently ranked among the top six members completing the Thriving at Work Assessment. In 2023 and 2024 three more companies established themselves in the top six. As a result, the finance, legal, and insurance sectors are all represented among the top performing companies, together with one conglomerate.

A positive interpretation of this result is that advancing workplace mental health is achievable across all sectors of the Hong Kong corporate community. These top performing companies have each successfully implemented workplace initiatives to advance employee mental health and have maintained their high level of performance across these years.

What are companies doing to effect change?

The 2024 CMHA HK Guide to Thriving at Work uses three Strategic Pillars and 10 Standards to cover the key areas of workplace practice which together contribute to achieving the physical and cultural change needed to establish a workplace where employees can thrive. The Guide serves as a template for companies to select those practices that suit their operations and enables them to establish workplace practices which support employee mental health.

- **90% undertook an assessment of their current mental health support services**, identifying the gaps and the additional support required. A similar number developed a strategy to promote employee mental health and the support available
- **Over 90% of companies have provided training for their implementation team** and general mental health awareness training for the broader employee group
- **85% of companies reported their senior leaders role model mentally healthy behaviour** and help to cascade mental health information through the company
- **88% have created opportunities for employees to have greater social connection** by providing meeting spaces and encouraging networking and resource groups that support informal conversations around mental health and wellbeing
- **Over 90% include information on their commitment to employee mental health** during induction programs of new employees
- **95% have established a supported flexible working policies** to encourage work-life balance

Innovative initiatives

Across all companies, regardless of overall performance, innovative approaches are being taken to address employee needs, support mental health and promote wellbeing. This can range from the types of training being offered, the way flexible work practices are implemented, the type of support being provided and how technology is used to provide support in new ways. The following initiatives are highlighted as ways in which companies are thinking creatively to support employee mental health.

Flexible work practices

Hybrid working model that includes flexible work hours and emergency family care leave to enable employees to look after family members in need; work from anywhere initiative to enable remote working to meet personal or care-giving needs.

Parenting support

Program to support new parents and a reintegration program for new mums to help them adjust to work by providing additional paid time off in first months of returning.

Support for managers

Provide managers with a Toolkit which includes insights on strategies to use to initiate discussions on mental health and work-life balance with direct reports.

Diverse training topics

Awareness raising on neurodiversity, disability, suicide risk, healthy perfectionism, imposter syndrome, innovative women's and men's mental health topics, and support transition to manager and leadership roles.

Data collected

Many companies regularly undertake wellbeing, satisfaction and engagement surveys either locally or as part of global initiatives. Innovative data points include employee stress factors, utilisation of resources, potential risks which are gathered through pulse surveys, digital apps, EAP usage and HR feedback. Data from exit interviews and monitoring stressors associated with long-term off-site projects are also being used.

In-house counselling

Several companies have engaged a registered counsellor to provide counselling services for employees at the office. This sends a clear message that supporting good mental health is recognised as an essential part of overall wellbeing and enables an employee to undertake their role in their workplace to the best of their ability.

The importance of leadership

Our research shows that the involvement and support of senior leaders to promote mental health initiatives and ensure on-going support for these programs directly correlates with a company's overall performance. Leaders who visibly promote mental health and wellbeing events to general employees, engage other leaders and ensure mental health is discussed at management meetings will have a significant impact on cultural change and the success of these programs.

Among the five top performing companies in 2024, all had fully addressed four of the five key leadership initiatives set out in the Guide to Thriving at Work. These top performers also worked to promote workplace mental health externally through thought leadership, sharing the company's commitment to mental health with external stakeholders, and leading on external campaigns.

What's next?

CMHA HK continues to work closely with our member organisations to support their creation of mentally healthy workplaces. As a member-based organisation, we are guided by a Board of Directors drawn from our membership and by feedback from members on their needs for resources and support. Together we have developed a range of resources and training modules that address the continuing need for employee support and workplace innovation that enhances employee mental health.

The CMHA HK Board and the Executive Team are acutely aware of our responsibility to share the insights and learning from the last seven years with the broader Hong Kong business community. To this end we regularly share our bi-lingual resources publicly to reach people more broadly and are particularly interested to reach Hong Kong-headquartered non-member organisations.

Through these initiatives we hope to encourage more Hong Kong companies to think creatively about ways in which they can support the wellbeing of their employees and to create workplaces that support mental health and ensure employees at all levels are able to thrive and contribute more productively to all areas of their lives.

About 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.



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