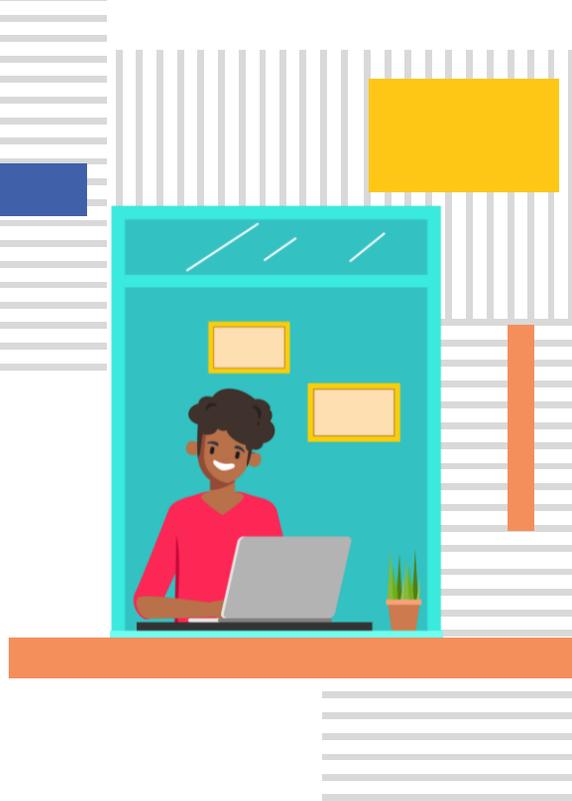




# TRIPARTITE ADVISORY ON MENTAL WELL-BEING AT WORKPLACES

A Tripartite Advisory jointly issued by  
Ministry of Manpower (MOM),  
National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) and  
Singapore National Employers Federation (SNEF)



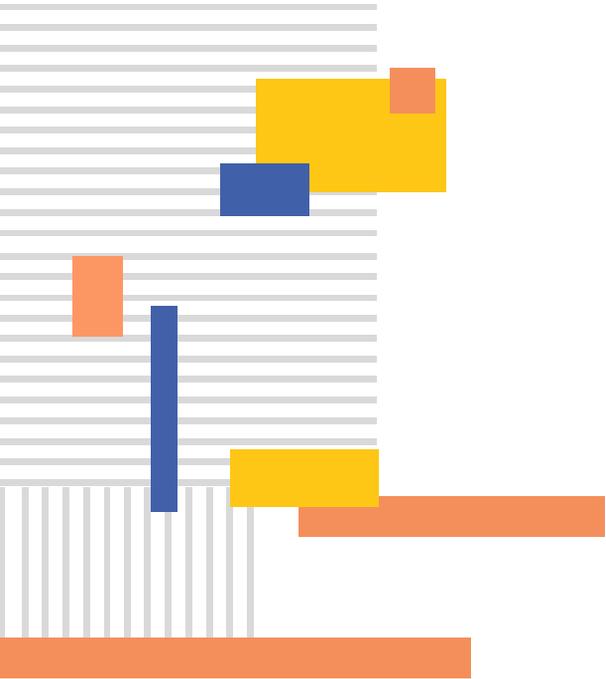
## PURPOSE

Mental health is a growing concern. The Singapore Mental Health Study conducted between 2016 – 2018 found that 1 in 7 people in Singapore have experienced a mental disorder in their lifetime, as compared to 1 in 8 people in 2010's Mental Health Study. International studies have suggested that work stressors were among factors associated with poor mental health<sup>1</sup>. This document sets out practical guidance on measures that employers can adopt to support their employees' mental well-being, and provides resources employers, employees and self-employed persons can tap on.

## MENTAL WELL-BEING AT WORKPLACES

According to the [World Health Organisation](https://www.who.int/) (WHO), work is good for health. A healthy state of mental well-being can also contribute to improved productivity<sup>2</sup>. A negative working environment, however, can lead to physical and mental health challenges. While a person's mental health is influenced by many factors, including both work and non-work factors, this Advisory's focus is on what can be done at workplaces to support employees' mental well-being.

1. World Health Organisation. 2019. Mental health in the workplace. Retrieved from [https://www.who.int/mental\\_health/in\\_the\\_workplace/en/](https://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace/en/)
2. Kangasniemi, A. & Maxwell, L. & Sereneo, M.. 2019. The ROI in workplace mental health programmes: Good for people, good for business. Retrieved from <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/workplace-mental-health-programs-worker-productivity.html>



## CAUSES OF WORK STRESS

Work stress can come from multiple factors and can relate to work content and work context. Work content refers to working conditions, such as job content, participation and control, workload, pace of work, and work schedule. Work context refers to organisation of work and labour relations, such as organisational culture and function, interpersonal relationships at work, and home-work interface<sup>3</sup>.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, practices such as mandatory work-from-home and split team arrangements have been widely adopted, leading to drastic changes to work content and work context that can and have contributed to work stress for many employees. While some degree of work stressors will not have adverse effects, employers should be mindful that extreme levels of such

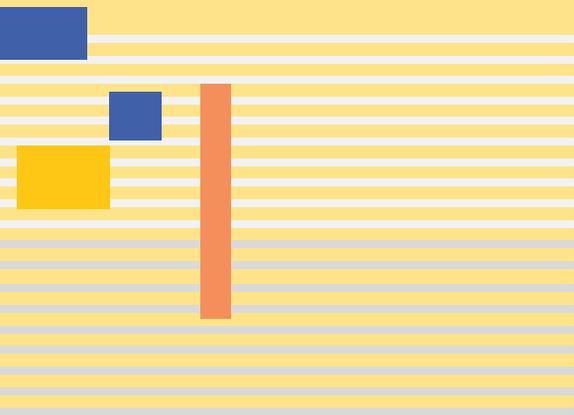
stressors at work can harm employees' mental well-being<sup>4</sup>.

Employers can consider the following recommendations to prevent work stress from compromising well-being and productivity. The recommendations can be implemented at three levels –

- I. Individual employees,
- II. Team/Department level; and
- III. Organisation level.

Depending on your organisation's readiness and available resources, it can adopt the recommendations that would work best to support the mental well-being of its employees.

3. World Health Organisation. 2004. [Work organisation & stress](#), Systematic problem approaches for employers, managers and trade union representatives. p. 6 -7
4. International Labour Organisation. 2016. [Workplace stress: A collective challenge](#), Report for the World Day for Safety and Health at Work



## 01 / RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES

- 1 **Appoint mental wellness champions to raise employees' awareness on mental well-being and mental health conditions through talks and workshops.**
  - Examples of mental well-being programmes include lunch-time talks on stress management, emotional regulation, relaxation techniques, mental health first aid, crisis management skills, etc.
  - Employers can tap on the Health Promotion Board (HPB)'s existing mental well-being programmes under the [Workplace Outreach Wellness \(WOW\) Package](#) or Workplace Safety and Health Council's [Total WSH Programme](#).

## 01 / RECOMMENDATIONS TO SUPPORT INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEES

**2** Provide access to counselling services such as through Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). These services allow employees to speak to a professional on their work and non-work related challenges.

- To encourage utilisation of the service, assure employees that their conversations with the service provider will be kept confidential and will not be disclosed to the organisation without consent.
- Individual employees should also look after his/her own mental well-being and reach out for help if he/she feels overwhelmed.
- Employers of migrant workers should identify service providers conversant in their native languages. See Annex A for a list of possible EAP service providers. Foreign domestic workers (FDW) employers could remind their FDWs of the option to call the Centre for Domestic Employees if they wish to speak to a third-party.

**3** For companies with flexible employee benefits (e.g. medical benefits), consider extending the scope of coverage to include mental well-being programmes, mental health consultations and treatments.

- This signals the company's desire to support its employees in overcoming their mental health challenges.



## 02 / RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TEAM & DEPARTMENT

- ① **Train managers / supervisors / WSH representatives / peer support leaders / union leaders to spot signs of mental distress, and on where they can refer employees to seek help from.**
  - Employers may wish to tap on the service providers listed in Annex A or HPB's wellness programmes to equip managers and HR personnel with skills to be supportive leaders at the workplace. [[Mental Health Training Workshops](#)].

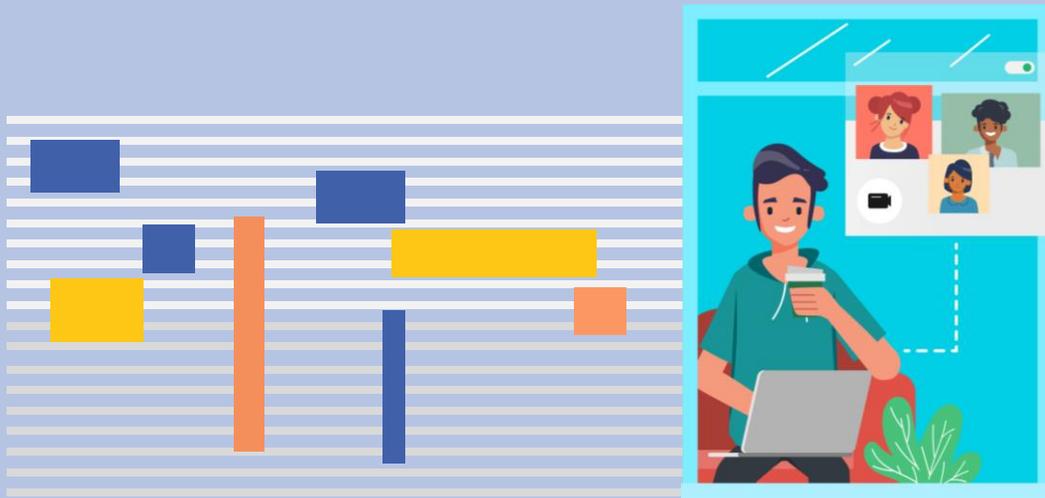
## 02 / RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE TEAM & DEPARTMENT

### ② Foster a psychologically safe and trusting work environment by having open and regular conversations on mental well-being.

- Supervisors can schedule regular check-ins with employees to assess their state of mental well-being and review/prioritise their workloads where necessary.
- If employees share his/her mental health challenges, it is an act of courage and vulnerability. Supervisors should respond with sensitivity and provide assurance that his/her challenges will be kept confidential and will not be documented.
- Teams could come together to share their thoughts/experiences related to mental well-being and their journey of overcoming personal struggles. Management can also encourage an open culture by sharing their stories. Such conversations seek to signal that 'it is OK to not be OK' and aim to destigmatise negative associations around mental health challenges.

### ③ Strengthen the social support system at the workplace –

- Form informal support networks such as peer support programmes, parenting support groups, mentor/buddy system, etc. Establish clear escalation protocols for these informal support networks to know when and where to refer their colleagues for professional help. It is also important to ensure that these peer supporters have their own network of support.
- Set aside time and resources for bonding activities (both face-to-face and virtual) to strengthen relationships among employees.



## 03 / RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION

### ① Review the state of employees' mental well-being regularly as part of risk assessment for workplace health.

- Conduct surveys to understand general state of mental well-being of employees and work stressors.
- [iWorkHealth](#) - a confidential online self-administered assessment tool is one of such surveys that companies can tap on.
- Employers should implement measures to address findings from the survey and track their effectiveness in improving the mental well-being of employees by monitoring the progress from survey findings and administrative data as proxy indicators (e.g. absenteeism/MC rates). Such measures could include upstream organisational changes to remove the source of the work stressor or minimise employees' exposure to the stressor.

## 03 / RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION

### **2** Review HR policies to ensure hiring practices, workplace practices and performance management systems are non-discriminatory and merit-based in nature.

- The Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices (TGFEF) states that companies should not ask job applicants to declare personal information, which includes their mental health condition, unless it is a job-related requirement.
- Employers should adopt appraisal systems that are fair and objective, with measurable standards for evaluating job performance. Please refer to the [TGFEF](#).
- Employers can also establish an internal channel (e.g. designated officers, survey links to send anonymous feedback) for reporting feedback and dispute resolution related to practices that erode mental well-being. Clear policies related to maintaining confidentiality for reporting feedback should also be articulated.

### **3** Implement and encourage take up of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) to help employees meet both their work and personal demands. Types of FWAs include (but are not exclusive to):

- Flexi-place such as telecommuting and work-from-home, which allow workers to work offsite to also meet their personal needs (e.g. caregiving).
- Flexi-time such as staggered working hours, compressed work week and time-banking, which allow workers to adjust their daily work hours according to their personal needs and productivity.
- Flexi-load such as part-time work and job-sharing, which allow workers to reduce their workload as required to balance with other personal needs.
- For more information on FWAs as well as resources on how to implement them, please refer to [TAFEP's guide on FWAs](#).

5. Ministry of Manpower. 2005. Work-Life Harmony Report. Retrieved from <https://www.mom.gov.sg/-/media/mom/documents/employment-practices/wlsreportfinal.pdf>

## 03 / RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION

### ④ Establish work-life harmony policy to provide clarity on after-hours work communication.

- Understanding the need for proper rest outside of work hours
  - Adequate rest outside of work hours will help reduce work burnout and improve productivity. This is particularly pertinent for employees who telecommute, where the lines between home and work become increasingly blurred.
  - Work-life harmony remains key to employee's overall well-being and optimal business performance<sup>5</sup>.
- Establish after-hours policy for work communication
  - Employer are encouraged to establish reasonable expectations for work-related communication after hours and have it communicated to employees.
  - For unionised companies, employers may discuss with unions (where applicable)

**Examples of work-life harmony policy** that employers can adopt as good practices:

- Employers should set out clear position that for work-related messages (e.g. SMS, WhatsApp, Telegram) and emails sent after work hours<sup>6</sup>, a response is not expected until the next working day, except for messages/emails marked as 'Urgent'.
- For non-urgent messages/emails sent outside work hours, senders could include a header stating that no immediate response is expected from the recipient.
- If employees are required to work after-hours, supervisors should consider giving time-off for employees to have adequate rest.

6. Work hours depends on the nature of the job. For global roles which works on international work hours, employees may be required to respond even for non-critical, not urgent matters. This is to ensure that Singapore remains as an important partner in the global economy.

## 03 / RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ORGANISATION

### **5** Establish return-to-work policies to support employees who are recovering from mental health conditions.

- Returning to work can be a daunting experience for an employee who is recovering from a mental health condition. Employers can support their employees by practicing FWAs (i.e. Flexi-load and Flexi-time) to allow them to gradually transit back to work while still providing time for treatments.
- Employers may wish to refer to the [NCSS Mental Health Toolkit for Employers](#) on return-to-work guidelines.

## QUICK TIPS ON WORKING FROM HOME<sup>7</sup>

	<b>Employers</b>	<b>Employees</b>
<b>Make home safe &amp; productive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance on how to set up a conducive workspace at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check for accident risks (e.g. no loose wires to avoid tripping)</li> <li>• Make your work space ergonomically comfortable</li> <li>• Sleep well, keep fit, eat healthy</li> </ul>
<b>Set boundaries</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a work-life harmony policy to provide clarity on after-hours work communication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take lunch breaks and regular short breaks (e.g. move away from screen every hour, stretch breaks)</li> <li>• Discuss work schedules that meet both work and personal needs with supervisor</li> </ul>
<b>Keep data secure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance and resources (e.g. equipment, training) to secure data</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abide by employer practices on privacy and observe data security</li> </ul>
<b>Stay connected</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have regular check-ins</li> <li>• Look out for employees who display excessive stress or burnout</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay connected with colleagues, including on non-work issues</li> <li>• Explore available resources offered by your employer and the community to improve mental well-being</li> <li>• Seek help if needed</li> </ul>

7. Adapted from "Working from Home – Healthy sustainable working during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond", The British Psychological Society, 2020

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (EAP) SERVICE PROVIDERS

Company	Contact
Singapore Anglican Community Services Integrated Employment Services	6812-9614/6812-9605 <a href="mailto:eap@sacs.org.sg">eap@sacs.org.sg</a>
The Centre for Psychology	6733-2893 <a href="mailto:contact@center4psy.com">contact@center4psy.com</a>
Mind What Matters	9172-9132 <a href="mailto:info@mindwhatmatters.com.sg">info@mindwhatmatters.com.sg</a>
The Resilienz Consultancy Pte. Ltd	6397-7300 <a href="mailto:enquiry@resilienz.com.sg">enquiry@resilienz.com.sg</a>
Counselling and Care Centre	6536-6366 <a href="mailto:anu@counsel.org.sg">anu@counsel.org.sg</a>
Centre for Effective Living	6338-3383 <a href="mailto:contact@livingeffectively.com">contact@livingeffectively.com</a>
Singapore Counselling Centre	6339-5411 <a href="mailto:counselling@scc.sg">counselling@scc.sg</a>
Work and Health Psychologists	6258-7502 <a href="mailto:workpsych@singnet.com.sg">workpsych@singnet.com.sg</a>
Workplace Options	6692-0840 <a href="mailto:service@workplaceoptions.com">service@workplaceoptions.com</a>
Human Dynamic	6535-5977 <a href="mailto:sg.office@humandynamic.com">sg.office@humandynamic.com</a>

## MENTAL WELL-BEING TRAINING SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ORGANISATIONS

Agency	What they offer	Contact
<p>Health Promotion Board</p>	<p>HPB offers the following workshops:</p> <p><b><i>Wellbeing@Work: Being A Supportive Leader</i></b></p> <p>Specially for leaders, supervisors and those in HR roles, this workshop will equip participants with skills and knowledge to support and engage staff. Topics covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising common mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety, burnout)</li> <li>• Starting a conversation with staff and showing appropriate supportive leadership (e.g. empathetic listening and responding)</li> <li>• Building a supportive workplace environment and encouraging help-seeking behaviour</li> </ul> <p><b><i>Wellbeing@Work: Supporting our Peers</i></b></p> <p>Specially for employees who are interested in playing a supportive role to and encouraging fellow colleagues, this workshop helps participants better understand how and what it means to be a peer supporter. Topics covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognising common mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety, burnout)</li> <li>• Initiating conversation with peers</li> <li>• Listening and responding in an appropriate and supportive manner</li> <li>• Encouraging help seeking</li> </ul> <p>Companies can also tap on HPB's Workplace Outreach Wellness (WOW) Package to implement health promotion programmes for their staff on a co-funding basis, where mental wellness workshops are included as part of the programme offerings.</p>	<p>For workshops Email: <a href="mailto:HPB_MHE@hpb.gov.sg">HPB_MHE@hpb.gov.sg</a></p> <p>For the WOW package: <a href="https://www.hpb.gov.sg/workplace/workplace-programmes/workplace-outreach-wellness-package">https://www.hpb.gov.sg/workplace/workplace-programmes/workplace-outreach-wellness-package</a></p>

## MENTAL WELL-BEING TRAINING SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ORGANISATIONS

Agency	What they offer	Contact
Singapore Anglican Community Services	Conducts mental health training to equip employees and supervisors with knowledge and skills on self-care and supporting employees with mental health conditions. Topics include how to recognise mental health issues and support a staff in need, building emotional resilience & mental wellness, and developing workplace initiatives that foster a culture of employee care and inclusion. Training can be conducted via webinars as well.	<a href="https://sacs.org.sg/psychiatric-services/integrated/employment-services.html">https://sacs.org.sg/psychiatric-services/integrated/employment-services.html</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:eap@sacs.org.sg">eap@sacs.org.sg</a>
Singapore Association for Mental Health	Provides talks and workshops on managing mental health and wellness.	<a href="https://www.samhealth.org.sg/our-services/outreach/samh-community-education-engagement/#come-d-contact">https://www.samhealth.org.sg/our-services/outreach/samh-community-education-engagement/#come-d-contact</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:comed@samhealth.org.sg">comed@samhealth.org.sg</a>
Silver Ribbon (Singapore)	Conducts talks and workshops on topics including recognising warning signs of common mental health conditions, knowing how to communicate and support persons with mental health conditions, and where to seek help etc.	<a href="https://www.silverribbonsingapore.com/workshops.html">https://www.silverribbonsingapore.com/workshops.html</a>  Email: <a href="mailto:Info@silverribbonsingapore.com">Info@silverribbonsingapore.com</a>

## MENTAL WELL-BEING TRAINING SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR ORGANISATIONS

Agency	What they offer	Contact
Clarity Singapore	<p>Conducts talks and workshops to help managers and supervisors understand the importance &amp; struggles of mental well being and build individual skills on improving mental well-being at work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing my Resilience at the Workplace</li> <li>• Designing my Self-Care at Work (Self-Care and Self-Compassion)</li> <li>• Improving my Emotional Wellness (Stress, Depression and Anxiety)</li> </ul> <p>Focuses of talks and workshops are on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stress Management</li> <li>• Building resilience to stress</li> <li>• Coping mechanism</li> </ul>	<p><a href="https://www.clarity-singapore.org">https://www.clarity-singapore.org</a></p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:ask@clarity-singapore.org">ask@clarity-singapore.org</a></p> <p>Phone no.: 6757 7990</p> <p>Facebook: @ClaritySG</p> <p>Twitter: @ClaritySGLtd</p>
Viriya Community Services	<p>Provides a range of mental wellness support services ranging from online forums to professional therapy services. The mental wellness forums aim to improve the understanding of various mental health conditions and strategies that can help to better cope with life's challenges (incl. employment related challenges).</p> <p>Viriya Community Services also runs support groups for persons facing mental health challenges and their caregivers and provides a multi-disciplinary treatment approach which includes individual &amp; family counselling, psychological services and therapies.</p>	<p><a href="http://www.viriya.org.sg">www.viriya.org.sg</a></p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:contact@viriya.org.sg">contact@viriya.org.sg</a></p>

## MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Initiative	Contact
mindline.sg	<a href="https://mindline.sg/">https://mindline.sg/</a>  An interactive website for a one-stop repository for resources and tools to improve mental well-being.
My Mental Health by Temasek Foundation	<a href="http://www.stayprepared.sg/mymentalhealth/">http://www.stayprepared.sg/mymentalhealth/</a>  It is a resource hub that provides online mental health resources such as mental health-related articles, online forums and information on support groups to support one's mental health during the COVID-19 period.
CHAT by IMH	<a href="http://www.chat.mentalhealth.sg">www.chat.mentalhealth.sg</a> webCHAT (Tue to Fri, 1pm to 8pm)  Provides free mental health assessment to young adults aged 16 to 30 years old with mental health concerns.
Belle, the Beyond the Label helpbot by NCSS	<a href="http://go.gov.sg/beyondthelabelhelpbot">go.gov.sg/beyondthelabelhelpbot</a>  Helps public gain easy access to relevant services and resources  
Workplace Wellness And You E-Guide by WorkWell Leaders	<a href="http://www.workwellleaders.org">www.workwellleaders.org</a>  Provides mental health tips and measures for employers and employees

## ONLINE/PHONE COUNSELLING SERVICE PROVIDERS

These services provide counselling support to help individuals cope with emotional crisis.

Online/Phone Counselling	Contact
National CARE Hotline	Offers emotional support to individuals who may be worried about COVID-19 and its impact on personal/family lives and livelihoods)  1800-202 6868 (8am to 12mn)
Care Corner Counselling Centre (Mandarin)	1800-353 5800 (10am to 10pm)
Silver Ribbon (Singapore)	6385-3714 / 6386-1928/ 6509-0271 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm) <a href="http://www.silverribbonsingapore.com/images/OnlineEmotionalSupport.png">www.silverribbonsingapore.com/images/OnlineEmotionalSupport.png</a>
Fei Yue Community Services	ec2.sg (Text-based online counselling)
Singapore Association for Mental Health	1800-283-7019 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm) (excluding public holidays)  Email: <a href="mailto:counselling@samhealth.org.sg">counselling@samhealth.org.sg</a>
Caregivers Alliance Limited	For caregivers of persons with mental health conditions  West Cluster: 9720 7590 and 9770 7996 Central Cluster: 9729 8628 and 9826 7115 East Cluster: 9736 9170  General Enquiries: 6460 4400 Weekdays 9 am to 6 pm (excluding public holidays)  Supporting caregivers who are business owners <a href="http://www.cal.org.sg/support-caregiver-businesses">www.cal.org.sg/support-caregiver-businesses</a>
Community Psychology Hub	For those experiencing marital, divorce or parenting stress  <a href="http://www.cphonlinecounselling.sg">www.cphonlinecounselling.sg</a>  Live chat: Mon to Fri, 9am to 9pm, and Sat, 10am to 2pm (excluding public holidays)  Email: A counsellor will respond within three working days.

## ONLINE/PHONE COUNSELLING SERVICE PROVIDERS

These services provide counselling support to help individuals cope with emotional crisis.

Online/Phone Counselling	Contact
HealthServe	Tele-counselling sessions are conducted in the native languages 3138-4443 (Mon to Fri 10am to 7pm)
Migrant Workers' Centre	Helpline for migrant workers 6536-2692 (24hrs)
Care Singapore (Hear4U)	Helpline available in different languages Service available from Monday to Friday  6978 2728 (English and official languages of Singapore)  Dedicated lines for migrant workers 6978 2725 (English) 6978 2722 (Tamil) 6978 2723 (Bengali) 6978 2724 (Mandarin)
Centre for Domestic Employees	24-hour helpline for foreign domestic workers  1800 2255 233

## CRISIS HELPLINE AND SUICIDE PREVENTION

Crisis Helpline	Contact
Institute of Mental Health	Open to public who come into contact with individuals who are experiencing any mental health crisis.  6389-2222 (24hrs)
Samaritan of Singapore (SOS)	Provide emotional support for individuals having difficulty coping during a crisis, thinking of suicide or affected by suicide.  Hotline: 1800-221 4444 (24hrs) <a href="http://www.sos.org.sg">www.sos.org.sg</a>



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Ministry of Education  
Ministry of Health  
Ministry of Social and Family Development  
National Council of Social Service  
Public Service Division, Prime Minister's Office  
Tripartite Alliance for Fair & Progressive Employment Practices  
Workplace Safety and Health Council

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