



City Mental Health  
Alliance



# Global Thriving at Work Framework

# Introduction

The City Mental Health Alliance's (CMHA) global vision is to put mental health at the heart of the business agenda. We want to see businesses, globally, prioritise the mental health and wellbeing of their people and ultimately create working environments where people can be themselves and perform at their best.

To achieve this, we have created a global framework to help guide organisations in developing their approaches. It uses an integrated approach that covers a wide range of factors which impact mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

The framework has been developed using evidence and learning from across the global CMHA membership community on what works in practice, and has been informed by academic research, workplace reports and other resources from across the globe. Please see Appendix 3 for a list of research and resources. We hope this tool will help guide global businesses to accelerate the pace of change through shared learning and set the global standard for good practice in workplace mental health.

## Who is this for?

This framework is intended for organisations that are either seeking to develop global mental health and wellbeing approaches or as a baseline for the development of programmes of work in countries and/or cities that are starting their journey. It does not replace the existing UK or Hong Kong (HK) Thriving Work Standards but exists as an overarching framework that both the UK and HK Standards align to. The existing UK and HK Standards have been mapped against the global framework – see Appendix 3.



### Terminology

Throughout this framework we will be using the term **mental health** to describe emotional and psychological wellbeing. We understand that in some areas this may not always translate and that other terms such as **behavioural health, psychological health, mental resilience** may be preferred.

# The Global Pillars

## CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

where mental health and wellbeing are prioritised and aligned with inclusion approach to ensure needs of diverse groups are understood and addressed and stigma challenged.

## DEVELOP A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT

with good working conditions, positive relationships and a healthy work-life balance. Policies and processes are inclusive of mental health and promote wellbeing.

## PROVIDE AND SIGNPOST TO ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES, TOOLS & SUPPORT

where employees are able to source help when needed, and protect mental health through encouraging self-care and personal wellbeing.

The Pillars are the high-level aims or guiding principles which organisations should be working towards to create mentally healthy workplaces.

In the framework, explored in more detail in this guide, each of the three Global Pillars is broken down into two sections: Foundations and Interventions.

The Foundations are the key organisational components that need to be addressed to achieve the Pillars.

The Interventions are recommended actions and practices based on research evidence and what has worked well across the CMHA member community. These have been arranged into three levels to illustrate interventions taken at different stages of progress: 'Committed' is having a plan in place, resources identified, and a commitment to take action; 'Achieving' is delivering on what is required to achieve the Pillar and measuring on-going progress; 'Excelling' is demonstrating leading and innovative practice.

# 1

## Pillar 1 – Create a Culture of Wellbeing and Psychological Safety

Creating a culture of wellbeing and psychological safety is about eradicating stigma associated with mental health and creating an environment in which wellbeing is prioritised by the organisation and those working in it.

### Foundations



**Organisational leadership** - culture is influenced by leadership. All levels of leadership need to be consistent in showing a visible and shared commitment to wellbeing. This can be demonstrated through the development of a mental health strategy or plan, active communication, participation in wellbeing activities, and leading by example. Wellbeing must be a core value and thoughtful leadership shown in the management of different processes, particularly those which may cause upset or distress e.g. redundancy consultation.



**Communication** - education and awareness raising is key to challenging stigma that can be associated with mental health. Research shows that listening to personal stories of lived experience of mental health and recovery is one of the best ways to challenge negative attitudes and perceived stereotypes. This can be done through communication and awareness campaigns. Education provided through mental health training and other guidance and resources is also an effective way of raising awareness, developing skills and appropriate language to have effective conversations about mental health.



**Inclusion** – individual identity and how we are treated has a significant impact on our mental health. Being valued, respected, and feeling a sense of community and social connection with colleagues in the workplace supports individual wellbeing. Organisations should take active steps to eradicate discrimination in the workplace by engaging with employee networks and/or business resource groups to increase understanding of employee experiences and how wellbeing programmes can best support the needs of different groups. These groups can also provide a safe space for people to talk about their experiences.

## CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

where mental health and wellbeing are prioritised. Aligned with inclusion approach to ensure needs of different/diverse groups are understood and addressed and stigma and discrimination challenged.

### FOUNDATIONS

- **Organisation Leadership** // Shared commitment // Compassionate leadership
- **Communication & Engagement** // Raising awareness // Accessible information & resources
- **Inclusion** // Anti stigma & discrimination // Safe space

### INTERVENTIONS

- **Committed** // Mental health plan/strategy // Senior leader engagement // Resources allocated for implementation
- **Achieving** // Awareness communications & campaigns // Storytelling/case studies of mental health & recovery // Provision of information, tools and resources // Mental health awareness training
- **Excelling** // Board/senior level sponsors with mental health discussed at Board/senior level meetings // Mental health integrated into organisation and HR/people strategies and aligned with organisation values // Focus on intersectionality & engagement with employee resource groups/networks // Commitment outlined in Company Annual Report

# 2

## Pillar 2 – Develop a Mentally Healthy Working Environment

Developing a mentally healthy working environment is about the way work is done and managed within an organisation. It aims to promote the development of policies, practices and processes and ways of working that support positive mental health and wellbeing.

### Foundations



**People management** – the mental health and wellbeing of individuals and teams should be a key responsibility of the people/line manager role. Managers can influence this by encouraging positive wellbeing behaviours and leading by example.

Mental health and wellbeing should be considered in the design and undertaking of key processes such as recruitment, performance management and exit. Organisations should also review team structures and reporting lines to ensure all teams and individuals are supported, especially in circumstances where there is little or no physical interaction (e.g. remote worker, working in client premises).



**Ways of working** – work provides many benefits which can boost wellbeing, such as social connection, sense of achievement, recognition, and development opportunities. However, there are also factors that can negatively impact it. Job design, workload and hours, relationships, control and autonomy, plus the physical office environment, are all factors that should be taken into account to support the positive mental health and wellbeing of individuals, teams and wider organisation.



**Risk management** – whilst most people will experience stress and pressure at work, it is important that this is not excessive or sustained in a way that damages a person's health. Organisations should ensure that any work-related stress and/or psychological risks are assessed and action taken where necessary. It is good practice to ensure there are procedures for assessing risk and appropriate channels for the self-reporting of risks, both of which should be reviewed by management or an appointed committee.

## DEVELOP A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT

with good working conditions, positive relationships and a healthy work-life balance.  
Policies and processes are inclusive of mental health and promote wellbeing.

### FOUNDATIONS

- **People Management** // Skilled & compassionate leaders // Inclusive policies & processes
- **Ways of Working** // Healthy working environment // Agile working // Positive working relationships // Autonomy & control
- **Risk Prevention** // Mitigate stress & psychological risk // Self-care/protective behaviours

### INTERVENTIONS

- **Committed** // Flexible/agile working policies // Wellbeing/health promotions // Stress/psychological risk assessments
- **Achieving** // Mental health training for managers and key personnel (e.g. HR) // Policy & process audit to be inclusive of mental health // Supportive absence management and return to work process // Robust recruitment and on-boarding process // Activities to promote community and social connection
- **Excelling** // Team wellbeing accountability measures for leaders/managers // Wellbeing included in feedback/performance processes and emphasis on development // Wellbeing reflected in Job design/workload management // Resilience training & resources

# 3

## Pillar 3 – Make Resources, Tools and Support Accessible

Every single person has mental health and everyone can take steps to take care of it. Organisations can drive positive behaviours by creating a working environment in which good health is prioritised and encouraged. Organisations can also play a key role in providing their people with access to support through good communication and signposting.

### Foundations



**Wellness promotions** – evidence shows preventative measures are highly effective in maintaining positive mental health and wellbeing. Encouraging healthy behaviours can be achieved by promotion of healthy lifestyles (e.g. 5 ways to wellbeing) through communications and campaigns, and wellbeing benefits and resources.



**Early intervention** – recognising the early warning signs of mental ill health and knowing where to signpost will help individuals get the right support and treatment they need to recover. It is important that the services are accessible, are representative, and meet the needs of diverse groups. Leaders also have an important role to play in advocating support services and encouraging people to use them if they need to.



**Engagement** – early and easy access to support services is key. Organisations should consider introducing measures to develop mental health literacy across the organisation to spot early warning signs of stress and mental ill health. This can be done by developing skills of managers and others such as Mental Health First Aiders, Wellbeing Champions/Mental Health Advocates to have good conversations, and ensure clear communication and signposting is in place to help to both internal or external services.



## PROVIDE AND SIGNPOST TO ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES, TOOLS & SUPPORT

where employees are able to source help when needed, and protect psychological wellbeing through encouraging self-care and personal wellbeing.

### FOUNDATIONS

- **Wellness Promotion** // Resilience & self-care activities // Healthy lifestyle promotion
- **Early Intervention** // Accessible & diverse support
- **Engagement** // Champions & supporters // Communication & advocacy

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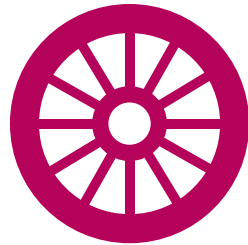
### INTERVENTIONS

- **Committed** // Communications signposting to information and support services // Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) / counselling provision
- **Achieving** // Prevention activities & education programmes // Leaders role modelling positive wellbeing behaviours // Mental Health First Aid/ Wellbeing Champions/ Advocates // Tailored communications/signposting to support for diverse groups // Signpost new joiners to wellbeing provision
- **Excelling** // Self-referral support pathways // Support specifically tailored to and representative of diverse groups // Evaluation & monitoring of utilisation

# Global interventions

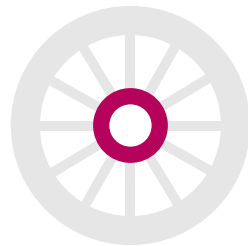
There are many different interventions to support the Pillars that can be implemented at either a global or local level or both. One of the key challenges in developing a global approach is how to implement a programme consistently across different regions, countries and jurisdictions. Some of these challenges may include different levels of mental health awareness and stigma, cultural and/or legal considerations, public mental health care provision, availability and quality of workplace mental health and services (e.g. training providers), and language barriers.

We have identified three different models to global approaches that we have seen successfully adopted by organisations:



***Wheel – a fully standardised global approach, with strategy and interventions developed and implemented centrally at a global level with minimal variation for different markets.***

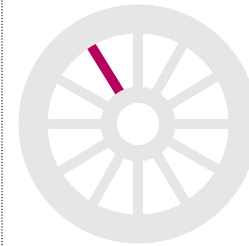
This approach ensures consistency globally and may be more efficient in terms of cost and internal resources, however, it requires significant engagement, research and consultation with local teams to ensure successful implementation and utilisation.



***Hub – a semi-centralised approach with strategy development and co-ordination managed globally, with implementation devolved to local teams.***

This approach may not have the scaled efficiencies of the 'Wheel' approach but will be more responsive to local need. For example, an organisation taking this approach may look to develop a

set of minimum standards or principles to be adhered to in relation to a globally set strategic intervention (e.g. EAP provision or training) but allow local teams to select providers. This approach will help to achieve some level of consistency across a global organisation, but enable devolved decision making to determine programmes and providers that best meet the needs of the local environment.



***Spoke – a decentralised approach, with strategies and approaches driven by local need and implementation managed locally.***

As this approach does not require coordination with other markets or alignment with a globally set strategy, this will provide more agility and enable accelerated implementation. This may be used in markets where workplace mental health is more advanced, or conversely in markets with lower levels of maturity workplace. For a global organisation, wanting to take a global approach, this may be used a method to pilot interventions.

# Impact

Through taking these steps,  
organisations should expect to see:



Reduced stigma with better awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing



Improvements in employee health through self-care and responsibility for personal wellbeing



Access to appropriate help and support when and if needed - resulting in lower absenteeism, presenteeism and retention of talent



Increased trust in leadership and the organisation with better support for team wellbeing and better performing teams through an energised, inspired and motivated workforce



Enhanced ESG credentials/brand with investors, clients, and consumers



Enhanced employer brand to attract future talent



Increased awareness and understanding of mental health and wellbeing in the wider community by giving employees the education and resources to share outside of the workplace

# Measurement

Measurement of your mental health and wellbeing approach can help to assess impact and inform future priorities. What you measure will depend upon what information you currently collect and in some locations there may be restrictions on this or even no data collected. If you can use wellbeing data as a measurement tool, the best approach is to be clear on your goals and desired outcomes and this should help inform what data you should use. As a guide, please see the table of suggested data measurements below:

## **CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY**

where mental health and wellbeing are prioritised. Aligned with inclusion approach to ensure needs of different/diverse groups are understood and addressed and stigma and discrimination challenged.

- Disclosure rates
- Mental health case studies
- Engagement survey feedback
- Wellbeing survey feedback
- Feedback/performance review data
- Grievances
- Exits/reasons for leaving
- Recruitment/candidate review forums (e.g. Glassdoor)

## **DEVELOP A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

with good working conditions, positive relationships and a healthy work-life balance. Policies and processes are inclusive of mental health and promote wellbeing.

- Absence monitoring (short & long term)
- Retention data for those with diagnosed mental health conditions
- Policy & process audit
- Stress & psychological risk assessments
- Work utilisation/hours worked
- Benchmarking (external)

## **PROVIDE AND SIGNPOST TO ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES, TOOLS & SUPPORT**

where employees are able to source help when needed, and protect psychological wellbeing through encouraging self-care and personal wellbeing

- Utilisation of wellbeing interventions
- Participation in activities & events
- Website/intranet/app usage
- Service provider data (e.g. Medical insurance claims, EAP, utilisation of apps)

# Appendix 1 - Mapping to existing UK & HK TAW Frameworks

	UK	HK
<p><b>CREATE A CULTURE OF WELLBEING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY</b> where mental health and wellbeing are prioritised. Aligned with inclusion approach to ensure needs of different/diverse groups are understood and addressed and stigma and discrimination challenged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Standard 1</b> - Communication &amp; Engagement</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 2</b> - Senior Leadership</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 3</b> - Transparency &amp; Accountability</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 4</b> - EcoSystem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Standard 1</b> - Develop (implement &amp; communicate mental health strategy)</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 3</b> - Foster a Culture of Openness and Inclusivity</li> </ul>
<p><b>DEVELOP A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKING ENVIRONMENT</b> with good working conditions, positive relationships and a healthy work-life balance. Policies and processes are inclusive of mental health and promote wellbeing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Standard 5</b> - Managing People</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 6</b> - Employee Lifecycle</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 7</b> - Working Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Standard 4</b> - Ensure a Healthy Working Environment</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 5</b> - Promote Effective People Management</li> </ul>
<p><b>PROVIDE AND SIGNPOST TO ACCESSIBLE RESOURCES, TOOLS &amp; SUPPORT</b> where employees are able to source help when needed, and protect psychological wellbeing through encouraging self-care and personal wellbeing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Standard 8</b> - Opening the Dialogue</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 9</b> - Providing Support</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 10</b> - Monitoring &amp; Disclosure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Standard 2</b> - Increase Awareness &amp; Support</li> <li>■ <b>Standard 6</b> - Measure Your Success</li> </ul>

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## Appendix 2 – References & Resources

- [CMHA UK Thriving at Work Guide](#)
- [CMHA Hong Kong Thriving at Work Guide](#)
- [Banking Standards Board - 8 factors that affect employee wellbeing in the workplace](#)
- [Stevenson Farmer Review of Mental Health and Employers](#)
- [Deloitte 2017 – At a Tipping Point? Workplace Mental Health & Wellbeing](#)
- [Deloitte 2020 – Mental Health & Employers – Refreshing the Case](#)
- [World Health Organisation and International Labor Organisation – Mental Health and Work](#)
- [World Health Organisation Mental Health in the Workplace](#)
- [International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership](#)
- [The Mental Health Work Commitment](#)
- [Time to Change Employer Pledge](#)
- [CBRE Wellness in the Workplace – Unlocking Future Performance](#)
- [Xerox Working Well: A global survey of workforce wellbeing strategies 2016](#)
- [HSE Management Standards](#)
- [Beyond Blue - Headsup](#)
- [Workplace Health & Safety Queensland – Workplace Health & Wellbeing Toolkit](#)
- [The National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#)
- [Thrive at Work Framework - Australia](#)
- [Mental Health America – Mind the Workplace](#)



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