

# INTER-AGENCY ADVISORY ON SUPPORTING MENTAL WELL-BEING OF WORKERS UNDER COVID-19 WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Jointly issued by MOM, MSF, AIC, IMH and NCSS

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## Work from home and work suspension during COVID-19 could be mental health stressors

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to significant disruptions to work arrangements. It has hit our economy hard and brought about many uncertainties to our workers, including employees and self-employed persons (SEP).
  - Some employees may be anxious about their job security. Others, like SEPs, may worry about their work prospects and revenue sources.
  - Many workers have adopted work from home (WFH) as part of safe distancing. However, working remotely for a prolonged period may lead to social isolation.
  - Parents with young children would have to balance work with supervising their children's Home-Based Learning.

During this period of uncertainty, employers and workers could consider taking practical steps, and tapping on counselling resources, to support one's mental well-being.

## How employers could support their employees

2. Employers could consider the following forms of support:
  - a) **Keep employees on work suspension updated of the company's salary and leave arrangements.** Employers should adopt the practices in MOM's advisory on salary and leave arrangements (refer to the Advisory [here](#)) during periods of work suspension, and communicate their salary and leave policies to employees as early as possible.
  - b) **Supervisors to check-in regularly (i.e. at least once a week) with staff.** Supervisors could have informal conversations with staff, such as via video conferencing or phone messaging applications, on how they are coping, and encourage employees to support one another. There could be short sessions set aside before or after work discussions to chat on non-work topics.
  - c) **Provide flexible work schedules for parents of young children.** Supervisors could provide their staff with flexible work schedules and regular breaks even under WFH, to tend to their children's Home-Based Learning. HR departments are encouraged to inform their employees of online parent support (go to <http://www.facebook.com/familiesforlife.sg>; <http://www.babybonus.msf.gov.sg/parentingresources/> <http://www.go.gov.sg/parentingsupport>). SEPs may find these support useful too.

- d) **Provide employees access to an external counselling service.** Employers could consider signing up to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) as part of staff benefits (refer to list of EAP service providers in *Annex A* and other external counselling resources in *Annex B*). HR departments should assure employees that counselling engagements would be kept private and confidential. SEPs may avail themselves to the counselling resources as well.

Employers may refer to the [Mental Health Toolkit for Employers](#) for more information and resources on raising mental health awareness, training and supporting employees with mental health conditions.

### How employees and SEPs could support themselves

- e) **Maintain a circle of social support.** Workers are encouraged to reach out to their families and friends via video conferencing or phone messaging applications regularly. They can also tap on various counselling resources, such as the National CARE Hotline, if they need more help (see *Annex B*).
- f) **Stay active and healthy** (see [go.gov.sg/activesg-circuit](https://go.gov.sg/activesg-circuit)). Follow these simple tips:
- Have at least 7-8 hours of sleep every day
  - Eat a balanced diet to strengthen immunity
  - Continue to do moderate exercise every day
  - Take up one or two activities - e.g. reading a book, listening to music, learning a new skill online, etc.
  - Master a few simple relaxation techniques – [<https://healthhub.sg/live-healthy/435/stressrelaxationtechniques;>]
- g) **Tap on grants and assistance available.** For those concerned about income loss, the Government has introduced a range of support measures to help households and businesses including SEPs (visit [supportgowhere.gov.sg](https://supportgowhere.gov.sg) for more information on the grants available).
- h) **Find employment opportunities through SGUnited Jobs initiative.** This is an extension of employment facilitation efforts under the Adapt and Grow initiative to create about 10,000 jobs over the next one year and match jobseekers and workers affected by the current COVID-19 situation. (visit [sgunitedjobs.gov.sg](https://sgunitedjobs.gov.sg) for more information)

**Employee Assistance Programme Service Providers**

S/N	Company	Contact
1.	Singapore Anglican Community Services Integrated Employment Services	6812-9614/6812-9605 <a href="mailto:eap@sacs.org.sg">eap@sacs.org.sg</a>
2	The Centre for Psychology	6733-2893 <a href="mailto:contact@center4psy.com">contact@center4psy.com</a>
3	Mind What Matters	9172-9132 <a href="mailto:info@mindwhatmatters.com.sg">info@mindwhatmatters.com.sg</a>
4	The Resilienz Consultancy Pte. Ltd	6397-7300 <a href="mailto:enquiry@resilienz.com.sg">enquiry@resilienz.com.sg</a>
5	Counselling and Care Centre	6536-6366 <a href="mailto:info@counsel.org.sg">info@counsel.org.sg</a>
6	Centre for Effective Living	6338-3383 <a href="mailto:contact@livingeffectively.com">contact@livingeffectively.com</a>
7	Singapore Counselling Centre	6339-5411 <a href="mailto:counselling@scc.sg">counselling@scc.sg</a>
8	Work and Health Psychologists	6258-7502 <a href="mailto:workpsych@singnet.com.sg">workpsych@singnet.com.sg</a>

## Mental Health Resources and Services

CHAT by IMH	<p>Provides free mental health assessment to young adults aged 16 to 30 years old with mental health concerns.</p> <p><a href="http://www.chat.mentalhealth.sg">www.chat.mentalhealth.sg</a> webCHAT (Tue to Fri, 1pm to 8pm)</p>
Belle, the Beyond the Label helpbot	<p><a href="https://go.gov.sg/beyondthelabelhelpbot">https://go.gov.sg/beyondthelabelhelpbot</a></p> <p>Helps public gain easy access to relevant services and resources</p> 

### Online/Phone Counselling

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

Online/Phone Counselling	Contact
National CARE Hotline	<p>Offers emotional support to individuals who may be worried about COVID-19 and its impact on personal/family lives and livelihoods)</p> <p>1800-202 6868 (24hrs)</p>
Care Corner Counselling Centre (Mandarin)	1800-353 5800 (10am to 10pm)
Silver Ribbon (Singapore)	<p>6385-3714 / 6386-1928/ 6509-0271 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm) <a href="https://www.silverribbonsingapore.com/images/OnlineEmotionalSupport.png">https://www.silverribbonsingapore.com/images/OnlineEmotionalSupport.png</a></p>
Singapore Association for Mental Health	<p>1800-283-7019 (Mon to Fri, 9am to 6pm) (excluding public holidays)</p> <p>Email: <a href="mailto:counselling@samhealth.org.sg">counselling@samhealth.org.sg</a></p>

<p>Caregivers Alliance Limited</p>	<p>For caregivers of persons with mental health conditions</p> <p>West Cluster: 9720-7590 &amp; 9770-7996  Central Cluster: 9729-8628 &amp; 9826-7115  East Cluster: 9736-9170</p> <p>General Enquiries: 6460-4400  Weekdays 9 am to 6 pm (excluding public holidays)</p> <p>Supporting caregivers who are business owners  <a href="http://www.cal.org.sg/support-caregiver-businesses">www.cal.org.sg/support-caregiver-businesses</a></p>
<p>Community Psychology Hub</p>	<p>For those experiencing marital, divorce or parenting stress</p> <p><a href="http://www.cphonlinecounselling.sg">www.cphonlinecounselling.sg</a></p> <p>Live chat: Mon to Fri, 9am to 9pm, and Sat, 10am to 2pm (excluding public holidays)</p> <p>Email: A counsellor will respond within three working days.</p>

### Crisis Helpline and Suicide Prevention

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