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HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD LAUNCHES INTEGRATED WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH SOLUTION AND CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR HEALTHY MIND TO IMPROVE MENTAL WELL-BEING OF WORKING SINGAPOREANS

This follows research that shows the mental well-being of Singaporeans in the workforce is lower than the general population.

Singapore, 3 August 2012: According to an online Mental Well-being Survey by the Health Promotion Board (HPB), the mental well-being scores of working Singaporeans are lower than the general population by 13 per cent.

2. Data from another HPB survey also indicates that one in six working adults in Singapore experiences a relatively high level of stress compared to one in 10 non-working adults.
3. At the same time, 40 per cent of the 1,200 Small- and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) HPB surveyed expressed an intention to invest in the mental well-being of their employees – even though three quarters of them recognise the benefits of supporting and improving staff's mental health.
4. This gap could be due to a few reasons, such as a lack of resources and knowledge, or not enough employees to make conducting workshops and talks viable.
5. To improve the mental well-being of Singapore's workforce and help employers do more to promote mental health at the workplace, HPB is launching a new initiative called the Workplace Mental Health Solution.

6. The aim is to create a convenient one-stop centre that offers both employees and employers accessible and affordable tools, resources and guidance to boost mental health at the workplace.

7. Providing solutions at three levels – Employee, Management and Organisational – the Workplace Mental Health Solution includes the:

- **Healthy Mind Hub at the Employee level**
An online employee self assessment tool to measure levels of mental well-being, resilience, stress, depression and anxiety, it also offers post-assessment self-help resources. Ensuring that such information is confidential gives employees the peace of mind to share honestly. In addition, the confidential aggregate data collected can guide the focus of a company's workplace mental health programmes.
- **Workplace Mental Health Investment Guide and Working Minds Health Curriculum at the Management level**
Developed by HPB, these are resources to guide managers as well as industry vendors on how to put together workplace mental health programmes that are effective, affordable and accessible.
- **Workplace Health Grant at the Organisational level**
Serving as an interventional enabler, the Workplace Health Grant is now \$15,000, with \$5,000 exclusively for the promotion of mental health. Employers can use the additional sum to plan or expand mental well-being programmes, such as counselling services, talks and workshops.

8. HPB's Workplace Mental Health Solution is one of the key initiatives of the newly-established Centre of Excellence for Healthy Mind, which seeks to research, develop and specialise in mental well-being and preventive mental health, as well as translate science and research into innovative, functional and relevant solutions for our needs.

9. This Centre of Excellence will address current challenges facing our population's mental well-being. At the same time, it will also be forward-looking as we anticipate the kind of work we will need to do in the future. Together with local, regional and international partners, we will build a knowledge base to influence decisions on mental health policies, practice and societal behaviour. The themes of our work include:

- **Well-being solutions** to empower Singaporeans to thrive and protect themselves against mental health problems
- **Population-centric strategies** to reduce the risk of mental health conditions such as depression and dementia
- Effective education and promotion to raise **mental health literacy**

10. Said Dr Amy Khor, Minister of State for Health and Manpower: “Nearly 70 per cent of our population are in the workforce, many of whom deal with stress every day as part of a typical fast-paced urban lifestyle. HPB’s Workplace Mental Health Solution offers a three-in-one solution to help employees and employers boost mental health at the workplace through accessible and affordable tools and resources tailored separately for employees, managers and the organisation as a whole. Companies will find much value in HPB’s Workplace Mental Health Solution as it supports them in creating effective and targeted programmes for their employees’ well-being. This, in turn, helps create a healthier, happier and invariably more productive workforce.”

11. Said Mr Ang Hak Seng, Chief Executive Officer, HPB: “While some stress can help us perform better, too much stress will decrease productivity and increase turnover rate in the long run. To ensure this does not happen, employees and employers need to address factors that can lead to not just ‘absenteeism’ at work but ‘presenteeism’ as well, a word used to describe how staff can be physically present but not performing optimally due to ill health related to stress and poor mental well-being. One of the goals of establishing the Centre of Excellence for Healthy Mind is to study how the overall mental health of an organisation can impact productivity and help companies establish a business case for investment in the mental well-being of our workforce.”

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