

SINGAPORE

# Promoting mental wellness at work

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Ang Tian Tian  
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The New Paper

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Reasons include fear of putting jobs at risk (23.4 per cent) and feeling employers would not understand (12.8 per cent).

Dr Lee Cheng, president of SRS, a non-profit mental health advocacy organisation, said at the Silver Ribbon Workplace Emotional Health and Wellness Summit on Friday: "There is still a stigma in society and some degree of self-stigmatisation."

The stigma is amplified by the mental health query found on most job application forms, he told The New Paper.

The Tripartite Guidelines on Fair Employment Practices state that job application forms should only ask for relevant information that assesses an applicant's suitability for the job.

Said Dr Lee: "When society becomes more accepting, (people with mental illnesses) will be comfortable declaring their conditions on their own."

Speaker of Parliament Tan Chuan-Jin said at the event: "Employers need to invest in mental health promotion because the mental well-being of employees have a direct impact on the workplace."

He said a mental health-friendly workplace can raise morale, teamwork and communication, and reduce staff turnover and the cost of training and recruitment.

The event saw 32 organisations pledging to support workplace mental health.

Ms Low Wan Ve, 43, human resource director at National Council of Social Service, which employs people with mental illnesses, said it has support groups and counsellors to promote inclusiveness.

Ms Naama Ben-Yehoyada, 44, director of Bailey Balfour, a consultancy firm that took the pledge, said: "By being supportive, employers can... boost productivity and performance."