

The screenshot shows the CNA website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the CNA logo, 'Singapore Edition', and various utility links like 'My News Feed', 'Bookmarks', 'Watch TV', 'CNA938 Live', 'Sign In', and 'Search'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with categories like 'CNA Insider', 'CNA Lifestyle', 'CNA938', 'Singapore', 'Asia', 'World', 'Commentary', 'Business', 'Sport', 'Climate Change', 'News Clips', 'VOD', 'Podcasts', and 'All Sections'. The main content area features a date and time stamp: '24 Apr 2020 06:30PM (Updated: 24 Apr 2020 11:27PM)'. The article title is 'Employers, workers can take steps to support mental well-being during COVID-19 pandemic: MOM'. A video player is embedded with the text 'MENTAL HEALTH festival'. Below the video, a text box states: 'Uncertainties in work arrangements caused by the COVID-19 pandemic can have detrimental effects on mental health and authorities here have outlined a range of suggestions to help both employees and employers cope.'

24 Apr 2020 06:30PM(Updated: 24 Apr 2020 11:27PM)

SINGAPORE: Uncertainties in work arrangements caused by the COVID-19 pandemic can have detrimental effects on mental health and authorities here have outlined a range of suggestions to help both employees and employers cope.

An inter-agency grouping comprising the Ministry of Manpower (MOM), the Ministry of Social and Family Development, the Agency for Integrated Care, the Institute of Mental Health and the National Council of Social Service issued an advisory on Friday (Apr 24) addressing the issue.

The advisory highlighted job security and worries about revenue sources as some of the potential stress points for employees and self-employed persons.

The dangers of social isolation as a result of work from home arrangements, as well as the balancing act faced by working parents with children undergoing home-based learning, were two other mental health stressors the agencies spoke about.

"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," the agencies said.

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN HELP THEIR WORKERS

The agencies pointed to an MOM **advisory**, issued earlier this month regarding arrangements during the "**circuit breaker**" period, with a particular focus on the clear and timely communication of salary and leave policies.

Supervisors could also check in with their staff at least once a week to find out how they are coping with working from home, the agencies said.

Non-work related matters can also be discussed, in specially arranged short sessions before or after work hours.

Addressing the needs of parents with young children, Friday's advisory suggested that supervisors help provide flexible work schedules and regular breaks for such employees.

The agencies noted that there are **online resources** for **parent support** available for both employees and self-employed people. They also suggested that employers consider providing access to external counselling as part of staff benefits.

HOW EMPLOYEES CAN SUPPORT THEMSELVES WHILE WORKING FROM HOME

For employees and the self-employed, the advisory recommended that workers maintain a strong circle of social support by reaching out their friends and family members.

They should also look after their physical well-being by staying active and healthy. Having adequate sleep, eating a balanced diet and doing moderate exercises can help with this.

The agencies also suggested learning a few **simple relaxation techniques** to cope with stress. Those concerned about their financial situation and income loss can tap on Government **grants and assistance**.

For those seeking work, the advisory pointed to the [SGUnited Jobs](#) initiative that can match jobseekers and workers affected by the COVID-19 outbreak to employers.

If you or someone you know is having trouble coping with the circuit breaker measures, here are some ways to get help:

- The National CARE hotline: 1800 202 6868
- Care Corner Counselling Centre (Mandarin): 1800 353 5800
- Silver Ribbon (Singapore): 6385 3714 / 6386 1928/ 6509 0271
- Singapore Association for Mental Health: 1800 283 7019 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)
- Institute of Mental Health (IMH): 6389 2222
- Samaritans of Singapore (SOS): 1800 221 4444

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