

OCBC, DBS, NUS lauded for mental health support

Two banks, an elevator company and a university were among those awarded for their efforts in prioritising mental well-being in the workplace at the inaugural WorkWell Leaders Awards on Friday.

OCBC Bank, DBS Bank and Otis bagged the Lead Well award, which recognises organisation-wide initiatives in creating safe and inclusive workplaces.

President Halimah Yacob, who was the guest of honour at the event at the Conrad Centennial hotel, said: "The winners today have established an important standard for employers to emulate by providing strong support for mental well-being, from the leadership down to a culture change at the workplace."

"It is encouraging to know that we are building momentum around addressing mental health as a nation."

Two individuals – National University of Singapore (NUS) president Tan Eng Chye, and the Agency for Integrated Care's deputy director and head of engagement and culture Maninderjit Kaur – were recognised for setting the tone and culture for building mentally healthy workplaces.

Professor Tan goes on daily morning walks where he checks in with staff and shares his own mental health journey with them.

He also set up a unit under the university's president's office to come up with strategies to address health and wellness issues.

Ms Kaur introduced initiatives such as Fantastic Fridays where the fourth Friday afternoon of each month is kept free of corporate meetings, and a peer support system with staff trained to provide basic emotional support.

NUS received the overall Well-being Organisation of the Year Award for placing mental health as a strategic priority and on its board's agenda.

Ms Anthea Ong, founder and chairman of charity WorkWell Leaders, said the awards were created to "help drive urgency behind Singapore's national efforts in the mental health domain".

She added that WorkWell Leaders will partner statutory Board National Council of Social Service and non-profit organisation Touch Community Services to feature stories of employees with mental health challenges and how their employer supported them.

During the event, over \$8,500 was raised to support HealthServe, a charity that provides medical help to low-wage migrant workers here. The funds will go towards the charity's mental health programme, which include counselling and 24-hour crisis helpline.