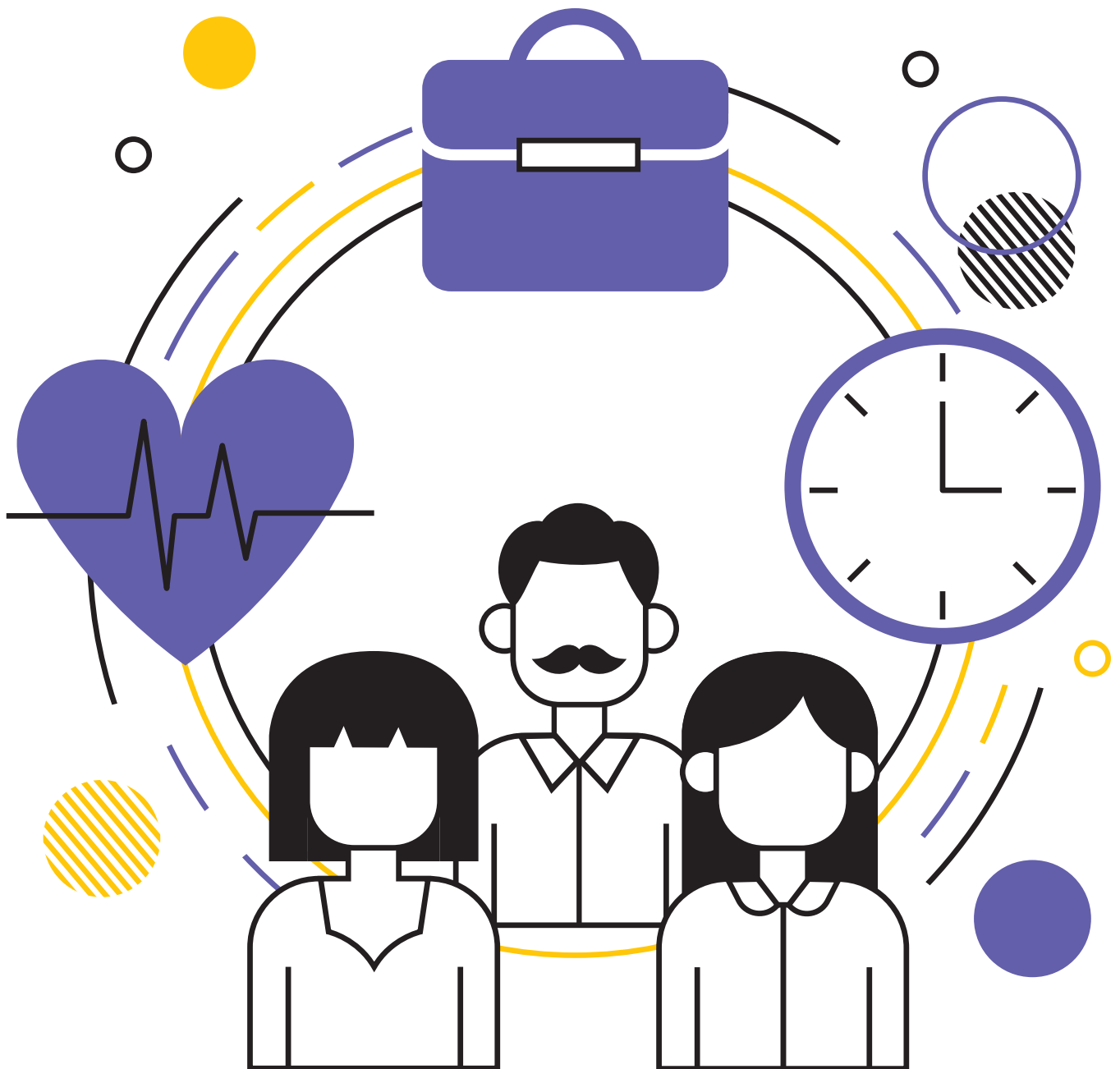
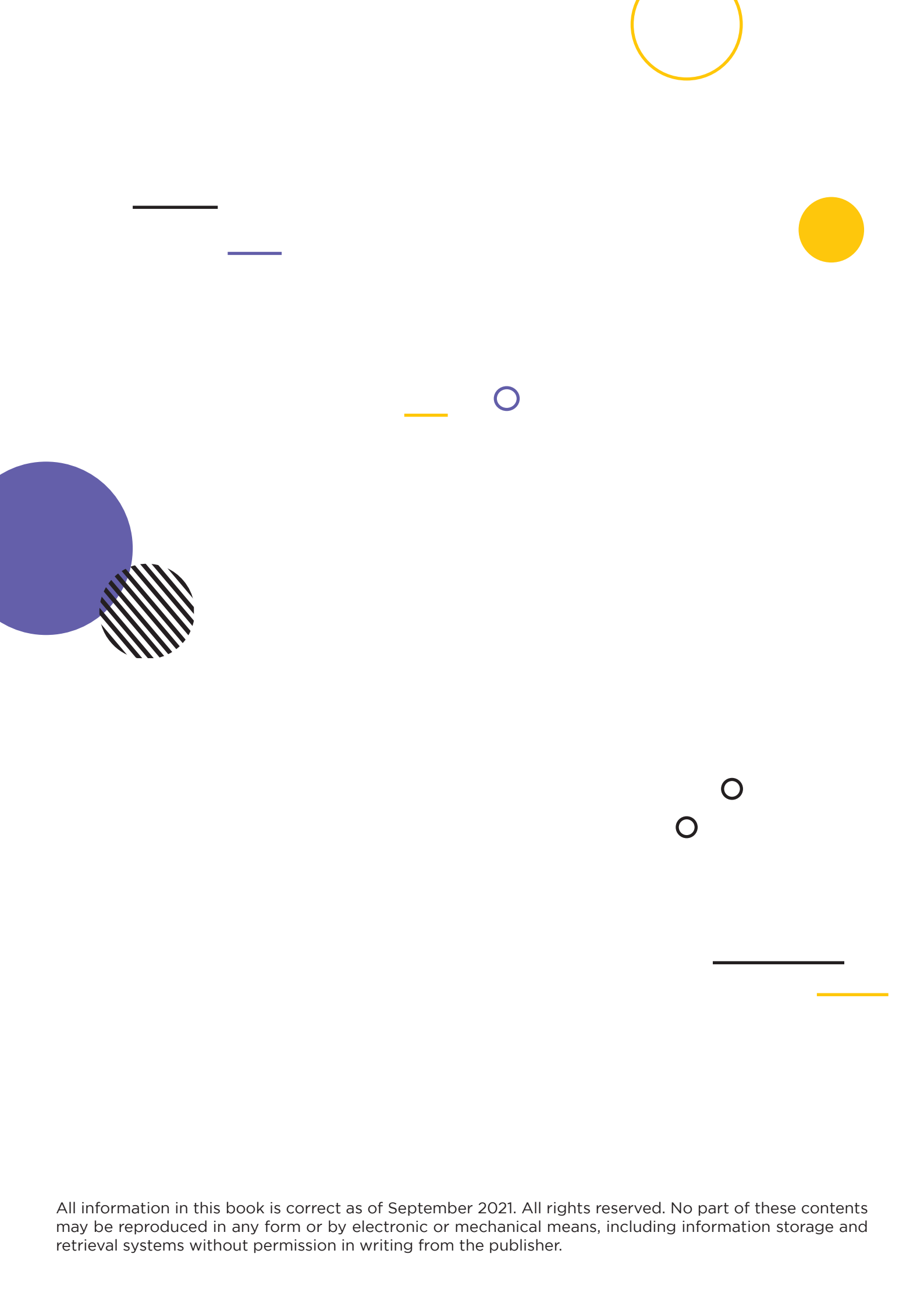

WORK-LIFE HARMONY GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES

THE **ROLE OF EMPLOYEES**





ABOUT THE ALLIANCE FOR ACTION ON WORK-LIFE HARMONY

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In February 2021, the Tripartite Partners announced the launch of the Alliance for Action on Work-life Harmony (AfA-WLH) to build a community of stakeholders including employers, employees, and HR practitioners who would,

- Improve awareness of the importance of work-life harmony and work-life best practices
- Support workplaces and the wider community to sustain and enhance work-life practices
- Support companies in specific sectors to overcome challenges and implement FWAs and work-life practices

The AfA-WLH comprised over 150 Work-life Ambassadors and other key stakeholders and were advised by Co-leads representing Tripartite Partners: Ms Gan Siow Huang, Minister of State for Manpower, Ms Yeo Wan Ling, Director, Women and Family Unit U SME, NTUC and Dr Bicky Bhangu, Council Member, SNEF.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ms Goh Wee Lee

Principal Consultant & Managing Director,
Strategic Value Consulting

Ms Goh provides consultancy and corporate training services in Human Resource Management and Work-life Implementation. It is her passion to make a difference in the workplace by helping organisations implement good work-life practices and leverage on their human resources to achieve good business outcomes.

Mr. Tham Chien Ping

SHRM Representative and Master Facilitator,
South-East Asia
Head, People and OD, Elevandi & Deputy
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Mr. Tham is a HR Leader based in Singapore with more than 10 years of combined experience in HR Business Partnering, Learning, Talent and Organisation Development locally and regionally in Asia. He is an advocate of "Better Work, Better Workplace" and has led global initiatives in D&I and Work-Life Harmony.

Mr. Victor Mills

Chief Executive, Singapore International
Chamber of Commerce

With nearly 4 decades of experience in the workforce, Mr. Mills believes work-life harmony is the output of a positive workplace culture. He is an active advocate for better workplace practices to help ensure the success of employers, employees and businesses.

ABOUT THE WORK-LIFE HARMONY GUIDE

The key premise of this guide is that work-life harmony is an integral part of a positive workplace culture (PWC) which enables every business to achieve maximum commercial success.

The Covid-19 pandemic has conclusively proved more jobs than previously thought possible can be done outside the office thanks to technological tools. While this may not apply to every job, it certainly is true for most office-based jobs. This, in turn, has validated the relevance and usefulness of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) like never before.

This guide sets out the key responsibilities of everyone in a business to implement a PWC and policies and procedures which make sense for each business, namely the Board, Senior Management, Human Resources, People Managers and Team Members. These are joint responsibilities and there is no 'one-size solution' which fits all businesses. Instead, each organisation will need to carefully consider the insights, tools and templates shared in this guide, to tailor a work-life plan that best addresses the needs of their workforce.

HOW SHOULD YOU USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide is segmented into 4 modules, each targeting a significant group of internal stakeholders within an organisation. This is done to highlight specific work-life harmony knowledge and practical tips that will be useful to these groups:

- The Board of Directors & Senior Management
- HR Practitioners
- People Managers
- Employees

WHAT IS A 'PWC'?

A PWC is one in which each team member is respected and developed to achieve their full potential to work for the company and its business goals. It is an environment in which no team member is abused, bullied, discriminated against, harassed or undermined. This improves talent retention and enables engaged teams.

When it comes to hiring, a PWC focuses on attitudes and potential rather than paper qualifications alone. This improves hiring outcomes and, together with more engaged teams, gives every company the competitive edge it deserves.

Work-life harmony is integral to a PWC.

WHAT IS WORK-LIFE HARMONY?

Work-life harmony is the desired state in which employees can effectively manage work and personal/home responsibilities successfully - often, this is due to a measure of flexibility offered at work.

Work-life harmony starts with trust. Businesses trust their team members will produce the work outcomes they have been employed for. Organisations that support work-life harmony,

- measure and reward work outcomes, not the number of hours worked.

- provide team members with the autonomy to manage their time and deal with family, personal needs and emergencies while achieving their expected work outcomes.

While work-life harmony is also about flexibility, it also involves consideration for each team member. Employees are not on call 24/7 and not be expected to respond to after-hours e-mails or phone calls except in an emergency.

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEES



Nurturing a positive work culture (PWC) and healthy work-life harmony practices within the organisation requires a collective effort, and is not just the responsibility of the Board, senior management team, HR and People Managers. It is also the responsibility of every single employee in the organisation, irrespective of job function or seniority. Simply put, you play a key role in co-creating and sustaining the PWC and work-life harmony measures that will ultimately enable you to lead a fulfilling life at work and at home.

These are some effective attitudes and traits that you may find useful in the workplace, as you seek to improve your personal work-life harmony:

- Be proactive in sharing your work-life needs and challenges, as well as making constructive and reasonable suggestions to improve PWC and work-life harmony practices in your organisation. These opportunities may arise in discussion with your people manager as well as split-level meetings with the senior management team.
- Recognise that thriving at work requires collaboration between employer and employee. Identify what you need from the organisation to be able to do your work effectively, while still practicing self-care and managing personal responsibilities. Have a discussion with your people manager and come to a mutual agreement on terms that are fair to the company and you.
- Give feedback to your people manager and/or HR. If you observe a breach of PWC and work-life harmony policies, do raise this to them for appropriate action and follow up.
- Provide mutual support for colleagues and team members, by showing respect and consideration. This includes restricting after-work hours communication on work matters, to necessary situations (e.g. urgent or emergency matters).



A SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST FOR FWAS

FWAs are increasingly requested by employees who seek to effectively manage their work and personal roles and responsibilities. However, before embarking on a flexible work option, it is important to objectively assess your individual work-life needs to find a solution that will suit both you as well as your employer.

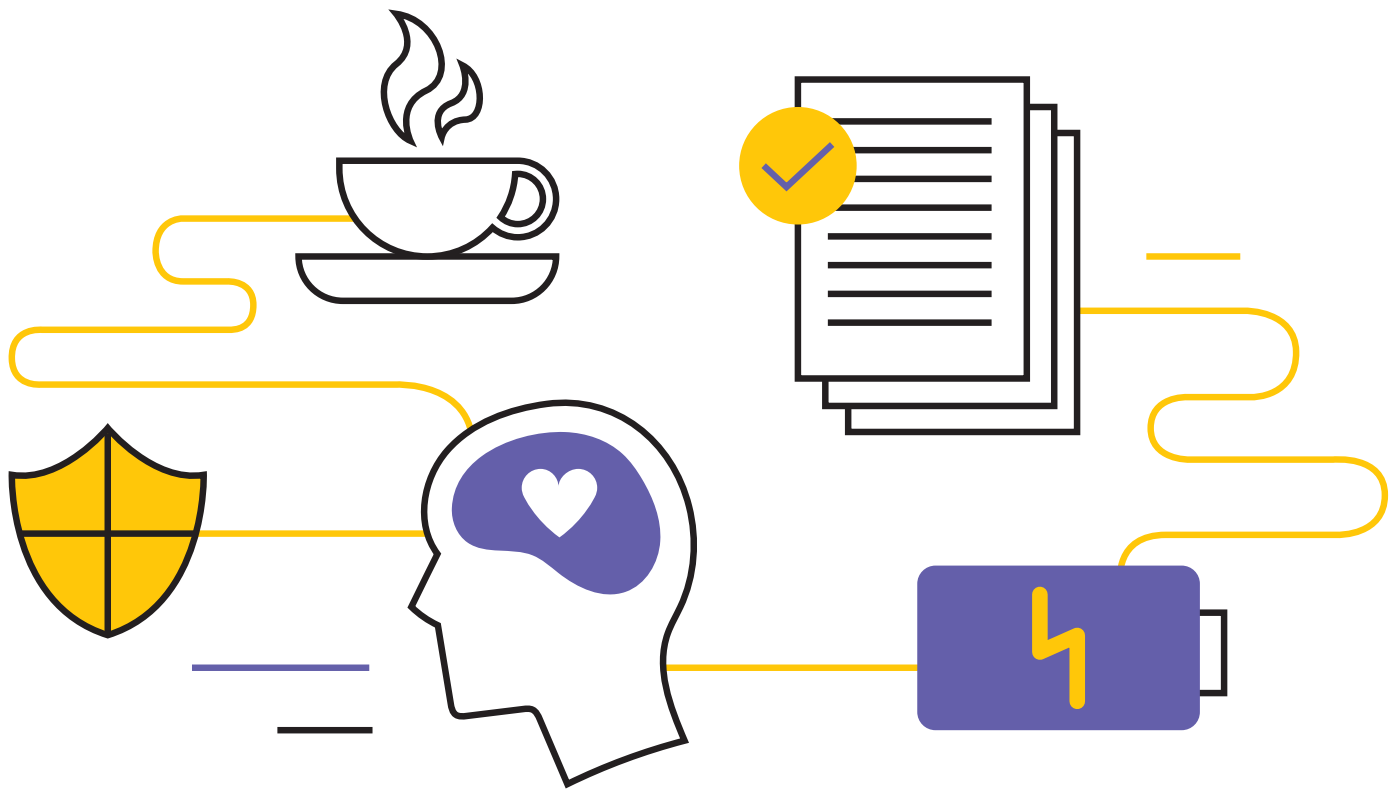
These are some key points to consider:

- What are your current work-life needs that necessitate FWAs? (e.g. caregiving, pursuing studies or personal interests etc.)
- What type of FWA would best help you meet your work-life needs? Do you expect to be on this FWA for the short, medium or long-term?
- Do you know what your job role, responsibilities and KPIs are?
- Have you demonstrated the skills, values and qualities required to work independently when required?

- What are the steps you will need to take to maintain your current performance standards? Do you need any additional support from your employer to achieve this?
- How will you maintain communication with internal and external stakeholders of the organisation?

Exploring these questions will help you to better understand your readiness to embark on an FWA, and possible gaps and challenges that need to be addressed. This can lead to a more productive discussion with one's manager and HR when requesting for FWAs.





MAINTAINING HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BOUNDARIES

Even as you seek to effectively manage the different spheres of life as a working individual, it is important to ensure your physical, mental and psychological well-being. This includes,

- Having clear boundaries between work hours and personal time.
- Taking short breaks to stretch and step away from work.
- Staying connected with colleagues and team members.
- Having regular discussions with your manager to discuss work schedules and manage expectations.
- Looking out for possible signs of burnout.
- Reaching out for help and guidance from your manager or HR when you need it- know that asking for help is not a sign of weakness.
- Being aware of the resources available to you such as Employee Assistance Programmes and time-off, amongst others.

COMMON SIGNS OF BURNOUT

Prolonged stress can lead to burnout. Look out for these common symptoms in yourself and others, to get early help and support.

- Physical symptoms such as headaches, stomachaches and other prolonged aches and pains.
- Falling ill often and taking longer to recover.
- Feeling alienated from colleagues and work.
- Feeling emotionally tired and drained.
- Medical conditions such as insomnia and depression.
- Unable to concentrate and complete everyday tasks.

Published by:



Tripartite Alliance for
Fair & Progressive Employment Practices

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About the Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices.

The Tripartite Alliance for Fair and Progressive Employment Practices (TAFEP) was set up in 2006 by the tripartite partners (Ministry of Manpower, National Trades Union Congress, and Singapore National Employers Federation), to promote the adoption of fair, responsible and progressive employment practices.

TAFEP is one of three agencies under TAL, along with the Tripartite Alliance for Dispute Management (TADM) and the Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) Council.

TAFEP helps employers build workplaces where employees are respected, valued and able to achieve their fullest potential, for the success of the organisation. Employers can approach TAFEP for tools, resource materials and assistance to implement fair and progressive practices at their workplaces. Employees or individuals who encounter workplace discrimination or harassment can seek assistance and advice from TAFEP.