

In its standing as a responsible, world class professional body, and considering how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected professionals and students alike, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (CA Sri Lanka) took the initiative to create mental health awareness among its primary stakeholders, including members, students, and staff, by organizing a series of educational and counselling sessions.

Chief Executive Officer of CA Sri Lanka, Ms. Dulani Fernando, emphasized that the pandemic and the related lockdowns during the last two years may have had a considerable impact on the mental health of professionals and students alike. "We decided to focus on this critical area given the challenges many people have been facing," she said.

Separate sessions were organized for the benefit of the members as well as students and the Institute staff. The series kicked off with a timely session for over 250 CA Sri Lanka members which featured Mr. Mahendra Jayasekera, Managing Director, Lanka Walltiles PLC, who is also a prominent Chartered Accountant. During the session, matters pertaining to managing mental wellness alongside the challenges of balancing work and life were highlighted for the benefit of the Chartered Accountants.

Another insightful webinar was organised featuring Dr. Chamara A Wijesinghe from the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Kelaniya to discuss the most common work-related mental health issues members of CA Sri Lanka have been facing in the recent past, and how the pandemic has elevated the people's stress levels and tips to improve their work-life balance. Over 200 members joined this interactive session.

Having understood the various challenges, the staff of the Institute underwent in relation to their mental health, especially during the work from home period, CA Sri Lanka also organised an exclusive session for over 100 of its staff members featuring well-known psychiatrist, Dr Sajeewana Amarasinghe. During the session, insights in relation to work-related mental health issues, stress management, stress related diseases, tips for stress release, and how to improve work-life balance was discussed at length.

Having considered the numerous challenges students have had to face ranging from being pushed to study at home due to lockdown and other issues, CA Sri Lanka conducted a virtual counselling session on mental health and wellbeing in professional education for over 200 CA students. The session was conducted by Mr. Joseph N Thilakaratne, former President of the Sri Lanka National Association of Counsellors.

CA Sri Lanka takes lead to create mental health awareness among stakeholders

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