

Employee Mental and Emotional Health Considerations for Employers

The coronavirus pandemic has been stressful, and stress affects everyone differently. That stress may still be evident as people return to work, and it will be important to be mindful of that.

What Can Managers and HR Professionals Do to Support Employees?

- **Continue To Be Flexible**

- If possible, continue to allow remote work flexibility, and even improve their remote work infrastructure.
 - Some employees won't be comfortable returning to work initially and will want to continue working remotely. With the uncertainty about future coronavirus outbreaks, it makes sense to have a strong remote work structure in place.

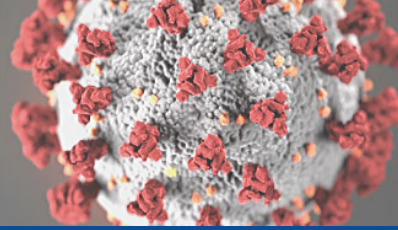
- **Better Communication Will Be Essential**

- With all the changes taking place as a result of coronavirus, it's very important to keep employees in the loop.
- Employees may be concerned about their futures at the company or changes to their jobs. Share what information you can with employees, and share the information often.
- Use virtual meeting options with video, like Zoom or GoToMeeting, for regular check-ins and to allow teams to connect with one another "face-to-face."



- **Transparency Will Not Only Help Ease Some Of These Concerns, But It Makes For A Healthier Workplace Overall.**

- There are still a lot of questions about what the impact of coronavirus will be in the coming months.
- Companies will have to continue to make decisions on the fly.
- The more employees are involved in these changes, the more comfortable they'll be with them.



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Here are tips for managers and human resource professionals in supporting employees in staying connected to the workplace and each other:

What Can Managers and HR Professionals Do to Support Employees (Cont.)?

- **Show Empathy And Be Available:**
 - Understand that employees are likely feeling overwhelmed and anxious about circumstances related to the virus.
 - Make yourself available to your staff to talk about fears, to answer questions and to reassure them about work and other issues that might come up.
- **Recognize The Impact Of Isolation And Loneliness:**
 - Working remotely can cause people to feel isolated, making it more important to routinely check in with your team, not only about their work product, but also to see how they are doing.
 - Be aware of significant changes you may see in your team member's personality or work product, because it may be a sign that a person is struggling.
 - Loneliness can lead to depression and other mental health issues.
- **Encourage Online Training:**
 - This is a great time to encourage employees to sharpen their skills with online training.
 - It is also a good distraction to focus on learning rather than worrying about other issues. Find online trainings and new learning opportunities to recommend to employees.
- **Check In With Your EAP And Health Plan:**
 - Check in with your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to confirm their availability and to coordinate support for employees.
 - Remind the staff that the EAP is there if they need support and can connect employees with behavioral health support, if needed.
 - Also, connect with the organization's health plan(s) to learn what they are offering to support plan members and pass that information onto employees. Be sure to include all relevant website links and phone numbers for both the EAP and health plan in communicating with employees.



Source: Center for Workplace Mental Health