Supporting colleagues to stay mentally healthy in unusual working conditions

The Coronavirus outbreak means many people are working in unusual arrangements. There may also be uncertainty and concerns from staff members. With this in mind, the CMHA UK team has compiled this fact sheet detailing useful resources and tips to support you and the mental health of your employees.

Looking after colleagues' mental health

Ensure that employees are aware of resources for support on mental health and wellbeing such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Be mindful that certain groups or individuals may be more affected by ongoing events and may require extra support and ensure resources are made available to them

Ensure that employees are aware of where they can get help or information (internally and externally) if they are concerned about their physical and/or mental health

Regularly communicate with employees to keep them informed on what measures are being put in place and how this may impact them

The Mental Health Foundation has released guidance on how to look after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak.

Supporting colleagues to stay mentally healthy while working remotely

Remote working has increased in recent years and has many benefits, however, working remotely for some of your colleagues may be a new experience and requires some adjustment for both the individual and teams involved.

Issues that can arise which might impact the mental health of employees working remotely include:

Loneliness and a lack of collaboration and communication with others

Being unable to set healthy boundaries between work and personal time and being unable to 'unplug'

Lack of motivation

Tips to encourage colleagues to stay mentally healthy

- Be aware that individual circumstances vary, and that remote working may not be appropriate for some staff. Be mindful of the disruption that school closures may cause to many families. Consider options to support individual employee needs.
- Provide appropriate IT support and guidelines to set up remote working to ensure that employees have what they need to fulfill their role and to be fully productive
- Set clear expectations of working hours, and highlight that employees are not expected to stay logged in or check emails after their working day is finished
- Advise teams to stay as connected as possible via company digital platforms, maintaining regular team and 121 meetings and encourage line managers to schedule regular check-ins with team members

- Encourage employees to stay active and ensure they are looking after their physical health
- Encourage employees take appropriate rest breaks away from their work and screen

Useful resources

Advice for employers

CIPD: Coronavirus (COVID-19) advice for UK employers: https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/emp-law/health-safety/coronavirus-factsheet

ACAS: Advice for employers and employees: https://www.acas.org.uk/coronavirus

Resources to promote good mental health

World Health Organisation: coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/coping-with-stress.pdf

Mind: Coronavirus and your wellbeing: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/

Mental Health Foundation, looking after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak: https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak

Mind: The 5 Ways to Wellbeing: https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-yourself/five-ways-to-wellbeing/

Resources on remote working

Trello: How to embrace remote working: https://info.trello.com/hubfs/How_To_Embrace_Remote_Work_Trello_Ultimate_Guide.pdf

IOSH: Home office, mobile office: https://www.iosh.com/media/1507/iosh-home-office-mobile-office-full-report-2014.pdf

Important information

Gov.uk: Latest government advice and information: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public

World Health Organisation: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Support

Help and advice lines: http://citymha.org.uk/help-and-advice-lines/

Save the Children: how to talk to kids about the coronavirus: https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/how-you-can-help/emergencies/coronavirus-uk-outbreak-facts#coronavirus

Contact

Website: www.citymha.org.uk Email: city@citymha.org.uk

This document is not and should not be considered as clinical advice or support. Anyone who may have a need for such support should seek professional advice.