

How to Help Your Employees Manage Self-Isolation During COVID-19

TOOLKIT

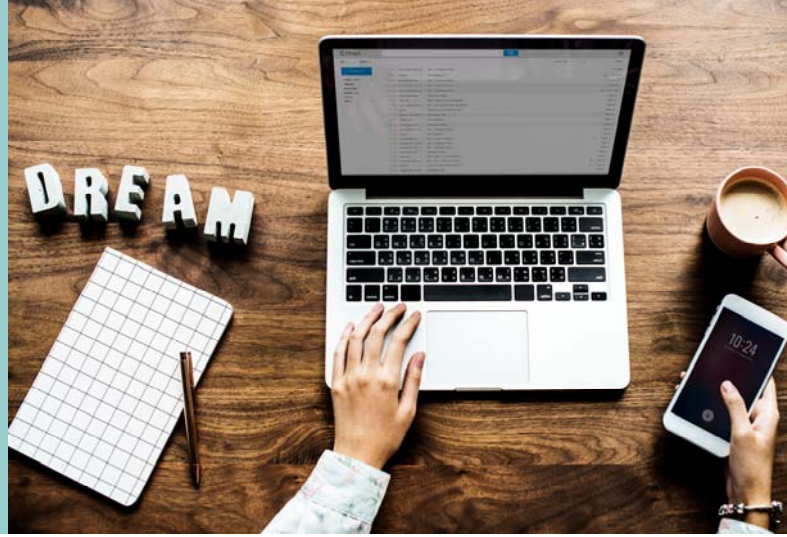


CONTENTS



How to Help Your Employees Manage Self-Isolation During COVID-19	3
Fostering Mental Health Awareness	4
Providing Tools to Empower Employees	5
Keeping Employees Connected	6
Reducing COVID-19 Related Stress	7

How to Help Your Employees Manage Self-Isolation During COVID-19



The COVID-19 outbreak is having widespread effects that go far beyond its threat to our physical health. Business owners are far-too-familiar with the economic effects that the virus has already had. But beyond the health and economic impacts that grab headlines these days, the mental health impacts of the virus are just as severe.

COVID-19 poses serious mental health challenges for today's employees, including concerns about job security, threats to the health of employees and their loved ones, sudden transitions to remote work, and the monotony and loneliness of self-isolation.

To keep up morale (and thus productivity), earn employee loyalty in the long-term, and simply do the right thing, business leaders need to do what they can to keep employees' spirits and mental health up amid the outbreak and quarantines. But that's far from an easy task.

That's why we have put together this mini toolkit focused on how you can support your team's mental health during the coming weeks and months. We'll explore the four pillars that will keep your team focused, engaged, and sane:

Fostering
mental health
awareness

Providing tools
that empower
employees

Keeping
employees
connected

Reducing
COVID-19
related stress

Fostering Mental Health Awareness



The first step in supporting mental health is acknowledging its importance. This is especially crucial because mental health has historically been treated as a personal issue rather than a health issue (and public health issue) and is often stigmatized.

- And mental health can be particularly complicated when it comes to the workplace. If you do not proactively talk about mental health and how you value the mental health of your employees, they may be afraid to bring up their issues or ask for either resources or support. Unless you show them that you are savvy with mental health issues, they may worry that their mental health challenges will be perceived as weaknesses or excuses.

The good news is that the COVID-19 outbreak provides a natural opportunity to start talking about mental health if you haven't already. Take this chance to reach out to your team members to let them know about:

- Mental health issues that can arise from quarantine/remote work/a national crisis – and what to do to combat them
- Steps that the company is taking or has taken to foster mental health and provide support
- Mental health resources including publicly available resources and employee benefits or employee resource groups
- For managers: how to tell when an employee might be struggling with a mental health challenge and what to do to help them

Starting this conversation won't just help your employees manage the COVID-19 outbreak – it will create a stronger, more supportive work environment in the long-term.

Providing Tools to Empower Employees



In your day-to-day, supporting employees in their mental health means providing them with ample mental health resources. Here is a mini-checklist of some of the resources that you should consider providing for your employees:



Health insurance coverage for mental healthcare including psychologist and psychiatrist appointments, prescriptions, etc.



Educational resources about mental health best-practices including mindfulness, breathing exercises, yoga, relaxation techniques, etc.



Wellness benefits including credits towards seminars or classes that teach and foster mental health (may need to be digital resources during the COVID-19 outbreak)



Paid personal days, not just sick days, or sick days for mental not just physical health

The current health crisis does mean that you should provide your employees with some additional mental health-related resources, including:



Mental health telemedicine, if possible: talk to your benefits broker & insurer about existing coverage and how to expand coverage as necessary



Resources on managing mental health during the quarantine



Advice on proper remote-work protocol for mental health rather than productivity

- For Example: How to set up a remote workplace to help employees minimize the feeling of being cooped up
- For Example: How to create separation between work and your personal life while working remotely

Keeping Employees Connected



Isolation and loneliness are going to be two of the greatest mental health challenges from the COVID-19 outbreak, in addition to the obvious anxiety about the virus's threat to health and safety. That's why it is so important for employers to do what they can to keep employees connected and engaged. This will have the added benefit of maximizing productivity and collaboration but should also be viewed as a mental health priority.

Here is another mini-checklist of some of the steps that you should take to keep your team engaged as they work remotely:

- ✔ **Keep the rhythm as normal as possible:** schedule video meetings for all of your normal in-person meetings, don't cancel them just because you are remote
- ✔ **Encourage employees to set up video one-on-ones** with coworkers and managers to collaborate or even have digital water-cooler conversations
- ✔ **Schedule regular check-ins** with managers and employees as well as regular all-hands on a team or company level
- ✔ **Leverage project management software**, if you haven't already: Asana and other systems can keep the work concrete and manageable while working remotely
- ✔ **Hold contests:** remote-work selfies, desk setups photos, beard growth, hat contests - you name it
- ✔ **Have fun:** there's no reason why happy hours have to end just because they can't happen in the office or bar next door; schedule digital drinking and socializing times for your team and even consider picking up the Drizly or Instacart tab for your team members

Reducing COVID-19

Related Stress



There's no denying that COVID-19 has been a huge stress-inducer for business leaders, from worrying about the economic impact on your company to wondering whether your loved ones will be okay. But it is just as hard on each of your team members. And as their employer, it's your responsibility to do what you can to assuage those fears.

That means communicating with them regularly to keep them up to date on:

- Positive developments such as expanded treatment and detection options, successful social distancing, etc., without sugar-coating the situation
- Simple steps they can take to protect themselves and others
- Government resources including CDC advisories and state-level recommendations
- Information on how new legislation will impact them and your business (such as the CARES Act)
- Steps you have taken to protect the company and keep employees safe on the job
- How their employee benefits will cover them during the crisis

Find Out More

We're sure that you have many more questions and challenges about how to navigate the COVID-19 outbreak to keep your business and your team safe. Please don't hesitate to contact the team at Maniaci Insurance Services. We are happy to provide business owners and HR professionals with as much information as we can.
