

COVID-19

Managing employee wellbeing through COVID-19



A free guide from Citation's HR and Health & Safety experts.



Citation

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As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have a whole new understanding of how people are able to stay productive through challenging, uncertain times, adapt to new rules and adjust to homeworking.

However, the pandemic has also brought a new set of risks to the wellbeing of your people. From blurring the work/life balance, financial uncertainty, and anxiety about the future – you may have to support your people in ways you've not experienced before.

Our experts have put together a guide to help you manage team wellbeing through the pandemic and beyond.

Where to start

It's important that you emphasise to your people that there's no stigma around discussing mental health, and instead you should promote it. Clearly communicate that you're there to support them at all times, not just when things are difficult.

This is a big task, so training your managers is vital. Handling sensitive conversations is a specific skill, and helping your managers understand how they can support their teams will help them tackle this.

And don't forget about your managers too! They'll need your support as they navigate the changes that working through the pandemic brings.

DID YOU KNOW?



According to the Office of National Statistics (ONS), 60% of adults surveyed said they felt stressed or anxious as a result of their well-being being affected by the coronavirus.

How you can support your people

There are a lot of options for you to look at when supporting your staff, and sometimes the simplest gesture can go a long way. It's important you analyse how much help your staff need so you're able to provide them with the right level of support. Here are a few examples of what you can do to motivate and help your employees, to get you started.



Take a look at your culture

CHECKLIST

- ☐ Set aside daily or weekly time for you and your employee to have a one-on-one during work time.
- ☐ Make sure your people are aware that they can be honest and open with you.
- ☐ Allow your employees to develop their skills through online training, so they know their development is important to you.
- ☐ Pay attention to any changes in their behaviour, mood, work output, focus or motivation.
- ☐ Provide your employees with more positive and constructive feedback so they know how they can develop.
- ☐ Keep connected with employees who are working remotely by regularly communicating -whether it's a phone call, video chat or text - make sure you're not just firing off lots of emails that may go unread.
- ☐ Celebrate your employees' achievements, whether they're personal or professional.

Supporting your managers

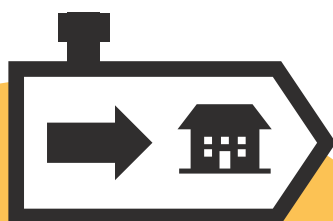


CHECKLIST

- ☐ Consider training for your managers so they know what signs to look for if someone on their team is struggling and how to handle any difficult conversations.
- ☐ Take their feedback on board and show them that you're open to suggestions, so they feel involved.
- ☐ Offer them opportunities to attend courses, webinars, and workshops on how best to manage their teams' wellbeing.
- ☐ Regularly communicate with them - they have the difficult job of supporting employees and they might well need some support too.

Remember

Promote positive wellbeing strategies outside of work through things like exercise, meditation, and healthy eating. Wellbeing isn't just about when things go wrong, you can be proactive too!



External wellbeing support

Supporting your employees during work time is crucial to maintain a happy and motivated workforce, but there are some uncertainties which you might not be able to reassure them of.

They may have bigger problems on their mind – like financial and legal questions which they might not feel comfortable discussing with you.

Teaming up with external providers can give your employees confidential answers to the most pressing questions around financial, legal, mental health and wellbeing matters, especially in these worrying times.

It means you can support your people around the clock when it matters most.

Adapting to homeworking

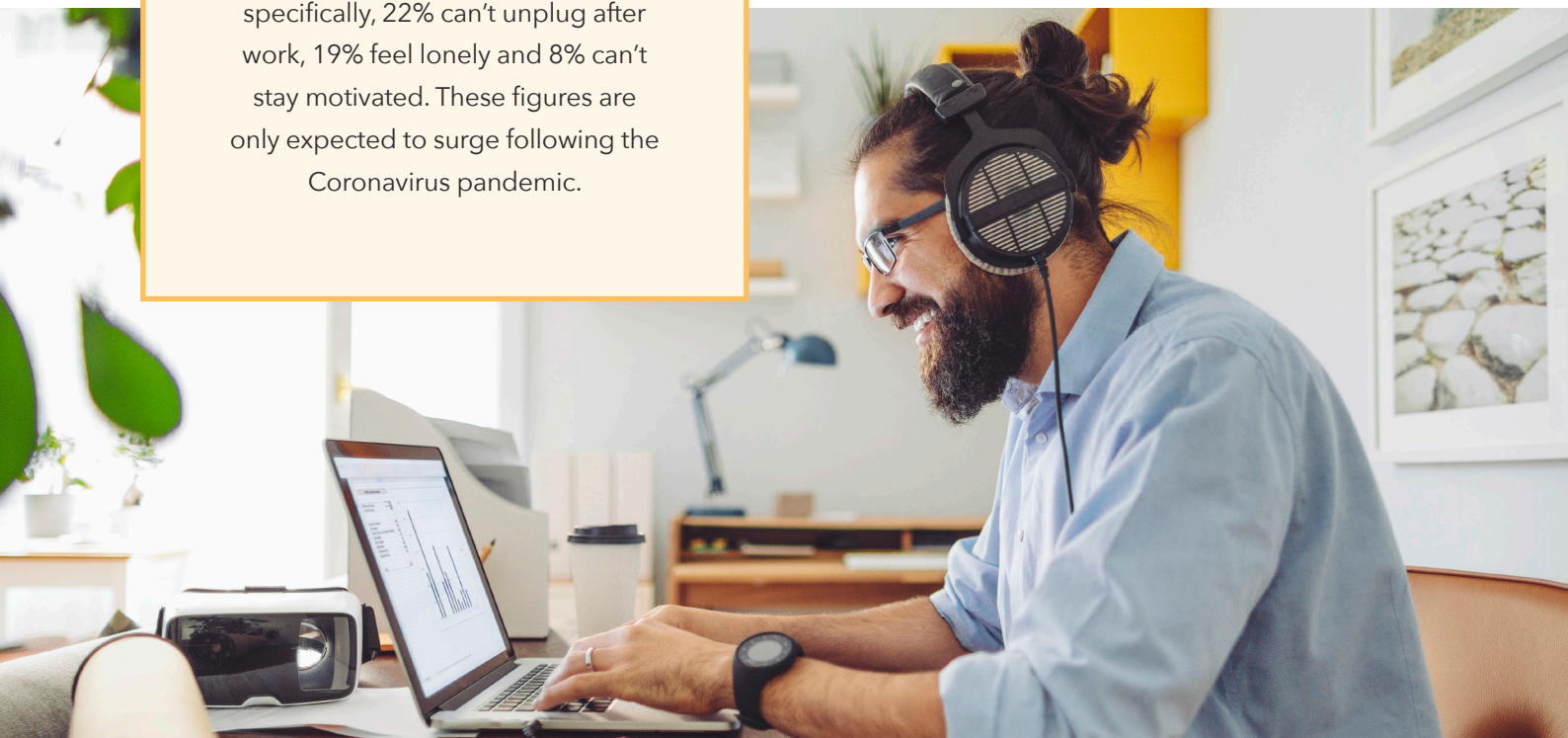
It can be difficult for employees to adapt to a new work style if they're used to a high level of interaction with their team every day. If a typical working day involves a bustling office atmosphere, calling consumers/clients or attending meetings, the new working from home policy can take its toll on employees' mental health and wellbeing as this drastic change can cause a feeling of isolation.



IMPORTANT

A 2019 report on the State of Remote Work by Buffer details that 49% of remote workers note that their biggest struggle is wellness related. More specifically, 22% can't unplug after work, 19% feel lonely and 8% can't stay motivated. These figures are only expected to surge following the Coronavirus pandemic.

Jumping from a public work environment to the confined space of your own home can affect everyone. It's really important to look at ways to make sure your people are still happy, productive, and motivated under the circumstances. Let's take a look at few ways you can make this work in your business...



Promote a healthy work-life balance

While you may worry that some employees may take working from home as an opportunity to take it a little easier, in reality, many will feel pressure to work harder, or longer hours, in order to prove they aren't.

As an employer you need to balance keeping productivity up alongside encouraging people to keep taking breaks. When working from home it can be very easy to feel tempted to stay at your laptop throughout your lunch or extend the end of the day by a few hours.

Be sure to encourage staff to work their contracted hours and don't stretch their working day into home life simply because they're working from home. As with everything, balance is key.

Collaborative tools and platforms

There are plenty of tools that allow employees to interact with one another such as Asana, Zoom, Basecamp, Trello, Flock to name just a few. These are online collaboration tools so everyone can keep track of where tasks are up to and who they're assigned to.



As a SMAS member...

We know a safe and healthy workforce is important to you. Have you considered providing an Employee Assistance programme (EAP) for your staff?

For as little as £35* per month, you can provide your entire workforce with over the phone access to qualified counsellors, via Citation's EAP. Here are just some of the issues it can cover:

- Relationship worries
- Bereavement
- Stress and anxiety
- Money Management
- Landlord disputes
- Parenting advice

Call **0345 241 5250** or email additional services@citation.co.uk for more information