



Ways to Decrease Workplace Anxiety from COVID-19

Below are seven tips to protect and aid in the psychological wellbeing of your staff:

1) Have a plan

Your employees need to know that you are looking to the future not just from the perspective of the business but from the employee's perspective. Stay informed of proper procedures and be ready to answer the questions such as:

- a. What if I get sick?
- b. How do I take time off from work?
- c. What if a family member encounters someone with the virus?
- d. What if I don't have enough paid time off or sick leave to cover isolation or a shut down?
- e. What are the symptoms and how does this differ from the flu or allergies?
- f. What steps are being taken to minimize the risk of transmission?
- g. Is remote working an option for working?
- h. What will our insurance cover?

**See the resource on the second page for credible resources*

2) Communicate with transparency

- Be transparent with your employees, even if you think they are tired of hearing this information.
- Fear and anxiety only grow when information is not available and a lack of information breeds rumors and innuendos.
- Make sure that you are sharing information from a credible source, and challenging information presented by a non-credible source.
- Maintains the lines of communication even if there have not been any changes.
- In times of heightened stress, concentration and memory are impacted, it is important to overcommunicate messages for clarity.

3) Demonstrate empathy

- In times like this heightened feelings of stress are unavoidable regardless of your position. Do not be afraid to share that you understand the feelings of stress that your employees are experiencing and remember The Village EAP is here for you.

4) Look for and share the positive

- In times of crisis we overlook the "good stuff" that give people hope.
- Offer a positive outlook whether sharing positive stories regarding what businesses are doing to help people and sharing reports that are showing people are recovering from the virus.

The Village EAP is taking COVID-19 very seriously and we are working to provide the best continued services to you. If you feel like you or an employee could benefit from talking to a counselor, don't hesitate to contact The Village EAP at 1-800-627-8220 to access your free and confidential sessions.

We are here so you don't have to go it alone.

5) Recognize this is not a “business as usual” situation

- Acknowledging work is going to be impacted, slow down and reassure your employees it is normal to feel apprehensive; changes will happen, and you will get through it as a team.

6) Encourage and model self-care

- Acknowledge we are all living in a time of heightened stress.
- Encourage your employees to practice self-care activities on the job and reassure them that it is okay to manage their stress at work in a healthy manner whether through relaxation, listening to music, watching cat videos, taking regular breaks, or laughing with other employees
- It is important to model self-care as well as providing opportunities to practice self-care.

7) Show gratitude

- Gratitude can act as a natural antidepressant because it causes the release of dopamine and serotonin which make us feel good. Gratitude also helps us feel valued and offers us a level of safety in uncertain situations.

Credible Resources:

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention - <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- North Dakota Department of Health - <https://www.health.nd.gov/>
- Minnesota Department of Health - <https://www.health.state.mn.us/>
- South Dakota Department of Health - <https://doh.sd.gov/>
- If you are not in the tri-state area please search for your state's Department of Health

References:

The Neuroscience of Gratitude and How it Affects anxiety and Grief – <https://positivepsychology.com/neuroscience-of-gratitude/>
6 tips to respond to employee anxiety about COVID19
<https://cmha.ca/news/6-tips-to-respond-to-employee-anxiety-about-covid-19>

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