

Workplace Wellbeing ...at home

One of the biggest challenges of the lockdown is how we can remain positive, productive and connected to each other when working remotely.

This can be even more challenging if you experience mental health problems or are just feeling lower than usual because of the coronavirus pandemic. There are four elements which keep us performing and feeling our very best, so we need to keep them in place when working from home:

- Set hours help us build routine and keep our sleep, diet and exercise in check.
- Regular breaks help us to process information properly and break it down before we act upon it.
- Connecting with our colleagues through good communication skills help us feel part of a community and able to support each other.
- Different physical environments* help us detach from the thoughts and feelings associated with work and truly rest.

*Yes, this one might be a little more challenging, but if you can't work in a separate room, at least unplug the laptop, tidy away paperwork and put it out of sight when it's time to clock off.



Solent

...this short guide will help support the mental health of you or a colleague when working from home.

Create a personal plan

Visit the [Every Mind Matters Planning Tool](#) and answer 5 questions to create a personalised mental health action plan which contains practical video exercises and more.

every mind matters

Coping with feedback

If we receive feedback when we're already feeling low, we can sometimes believe that people are being critical of 'us' rather than our actions... which can make us feel blamed or rejected.

It's important to carefully consider how we respond to feedback when working from home, because:

- We can't use body language or facial expressions to show how we may feel.
- Feeling bad about work can be worse when your workmates are not around to support you.

Remember a time that you have shared a piece of work and have received feedback that has upset you. How did you respond?



Passive: "You're right, I'm so sorry. I'm useless!"



Passive Aggressive: "Yeah, fine." (Inside: "I'll get them back for this!")



Aggressive: "How dare you! Who do you think you are?!"

We often react in this way when we don't take the time to process the feedback before we respond.

Next time, take a deep breath. Repeat the feedback back to yourself and work out if the feedback is true, partially true or not true. Then you can respond constructively, like this:

TRUE:

"Yes, this could have been handled better. What would have been a more helpful way of doing things?"

PARTLY TRUE:

"I'm pleased with the work we've done, but I accept that there are things we can learn for next time."

NOT TRUE:

"Although I respectfully disagree, it would be helpful to arrange a time to talk it through properly."

Talking about mental health

You don't have to be a mental health expert to make a colleague feel supported and listened to. By using open questions, withholding judgement and showing your support, you can help people through a difficult time:

Instead of:

"You don't seem okay."

"I know about those symptoms, I saw a documentary."

"I've noticed you look depressed."

"This is what worked for someone I know."

"I've only got five minutes before my next meeting, so you'll have to be quick."

"How long will you be off for?"

"Regards"

Try:

"Is everything okay?"

"How does that affect you?"

"I've noticed you've been a bit quiet lately."

"What can I do to help?"

"This is important, so lets arrange a good time to talk properly."

"Lets keep in touch. How often would you like to chat?"

"Get well soon, we miss you and we're thinking of you."

...More advice for managers

The distance between you and those you manage can cause worry or stress and miscommunication for employees if not sensibly managed. This is especially important for those affected by furlough.

- Consider the communication tool you use to deliver difficult or sensitive information. Start with a phone call (or better yet, a video call) before following up with an email.
- Schedule regular, structured 1:1s with staff to check in on their wellbeing, not just the status of their tasks. If they are experiencing stress or emotional difficulties, consider working with them to create a [Wellness Action Plan](#).
- Nominate a social secretary for your team who can create quizzes, games or virtual after-work hang outs to blow off steam and stay connected.

Finding this useful?

Our trusted Workplace Wellbeing courses can be delivered remotely and personalised to the needs of organisations of any size.

[Find out more here.](#)