



**Protecting and supporting your
staff's mental health**

In this current climate, you may well have some difficult decisions to make. Will staff need to be furloughed,

- **Be clear about what you are having to do**
- **Be straightforward, authentic and compassionate.**
- **Make sure you have the right information**
- **Be clear about what might be happening next**
questions people might ask such as "If I am laid off, will I get my job back?", "What will happen after I have been furloughed?". If you don't know the answers be clear and honest.
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- **Have plenty of team meetings both formal and informal.**
this time of social distancing. If your team is small enough, try having daily "stand up" meetings just so

Monitoring your team's mental wellbeing

- **Create an environment of psychological safety**
- **Continually gauge stress and engagement levels.** Make it clear to your team members that you are not. This may be hard for you if you are managing conflicting demands and are also getting used to a
- **Notice how your team members are working in a remote environment**



Having a conversation about mental health

- **Start with an open question** such as "How are you managing in the new circumstances?" In the same way as you would during a face-face conversation, be careful to just listen.
- **Try not to offer your experience of the current circumstances.**
- **Offer encouragement and emotional support.** If you are really concerned about someone and they do them - be specific and objective: "I noticed that you sent that email at 1am."
- **Be aware of services to which you can signpost people who are struggling.** If the employee has a known mental health difficulty, check that their usual support and treatment systems are still available to them. If you have an EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) or counselling service within your company, how

Work-life balance

It is very easy to be 'always on' while working at home or to create unhealthy habits, particularly if caring for children/family in the day and working late at night and at weekends. Breaks and rest periods must be

- **Allowing some physical rest and time for yourself,** essential. These are unprecedented times and so acknowledging this and being 'flexible' is key.
- **Set a good example.** If you choose to send emails late at night, early in the morning or at the weekend, be explicit about why you are doing this; that it fits with your chosen pattern of working and you do not expect others to do so. But make sure that you are taking breaks as well if you are not keeping a
- **If scheduled holiday has been planned**

[Working from home: Your Wellbeing Action Plan](#)



Digital wellbeing

as a manager, and your team:

- **Turn off pop-up notifications and alerts on your computer/phone**
- **A break away from all screens**
you return. Resist using your phone (social media, checking the news etc) during breaks. Make sure you
- **Find ways to protect yourself from the build-up of emails**
are not available and effective use of tools such as out-of-office can help with this. Likewise, respect
- **When working with people using a different working pattern from you**
- **Respect your need for home time**

that they do not feel forgotten. Bear in mind this may be an extremely anxious time for them and may also have serious financial implications, so it is important to be especially sensitive to the impact on their mental

- **Be as honest and transparent as possible with people.**
- **Make sure you keep communicating**
of anxiety and speculation about what will happen at the end of the furlough scheme. It is important to
- **Do you have online social events?** Make sure you invite furloughed workers along to these so they still
direct them to useful CPD or
development activities
how employees will be taken off the scheme and re-integrated into work

Be aware of what support is available, for example:

Do you have an EAP (Employee Assistance Programme)? What help is it able to provide currently?

Online self-help resources for support with mental health difficulties.

Have up to date information about new company sickness/absence procedures, sick pay, IT support and financial support.