



Tips and Advice for Managing Mental Health

Mental Health Awareness

Week 18-24 May 2020



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COMPLIANCE

Every May, The Mental Health Foundation campaigns around an issue for Mental Health Awareness Week. This year's theme is 'kindness', which is a key part of mental wellbeing – being kind to yourself, and others.

Focussing on wellbeing is increasingly important, so, this guide covers several subjects to help – not only during the current crisis, but in the future, however that may look.

Working from home

Many businesses currently have people working from home, so there are many things to take into consideration to keep everyone safe, both physically and mentally.

Work station/Equipment

Provide your staff with equipment needed for their job role, whilst adhering to social distancing. Issue a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Assessment to staff to ensure they are working in a comfortable environment. If equipment can't be provided then suggest home items that can be used in their place, such as books to raise the height of a laptop or cushions on a seat etc.

It is also advisable to use a homeworker hazard checklist, available on the Coronavirus page on our website.

The working day

If you currently have staff working from home, it is vital that you encourage them to build a new routine, as this will help reduce anxiety and increase a sense of control in the situation.

- Prioritise and set tasks for the day
- HSE recommend five minutes away from your desk every hour, and ensure lunch breaks are taken
- Use video conferencing software to stay in touch – especially if you are making a wellbeing check up on staff, as it is the non-verbal communication that can often tell us more about how a person is feeling
- Using video conferencing can encourage staff to always be dressed and ready for work, without having to mandate them to be dressed. This helps to differentiate between being at home and being at work
- Encourage staff not to share articles or information from non-reliable sources
- As an employer ensure that you provide enough information to staff to minimise feelings of anxiety and also "office" gossip
- Encourage healthy habits – regular exercise, healthy eating etc

Need a DSE assessment form or other help for home workers?

Please contact our Health & Safety Team on 01427 678 660 or email admin@skaltd.co.uk and one of the team will be happy to help.

SURVIVING WORKING FROM HOME WITH CHILDREN

One of the challenges of working from home is keeping your children occupied and ensuring they're still getting a decent education. Routine is really important too, so we've put together a daily timetable of free resources to help:

9.00am – PE with Joe Wicks

https://youtu.be/6v-a_dpwhro

10.00am – Maths with Carol Vorderman

www.themathsfactor.com

11.00am – English with David Walliams

<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>

12.00pm – Lunch – cook with

Jamie Oliver <https://www.jamieoliver.com/videos/>

1.00pm – Music with Myleene Klass

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQh2wgJ5tOrixYBn-6jFXsXQ>

2.00pm – History with Dan Snow

(free for 30-days) <https://tv.historyhit.com/signup/package>

4.00pm – Home Economics with

Theo Michaels (Mon/Wed/ Fri)

<https://www.instagram.com/theocooks>

Non-daily events include:

Science with Professor Brian Cox,

Robin Ince & Guests [https://](https://cosmicshambles.com/stayathome/upcoming-schedule)

cosmicshambles.com/stayathome/upcoming-schedule

USEFUL DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE

[Homeworker Hazard Checklist](#)

[Dos and Dont's for](#)

[working from home](#)

Returning to work

Whatever your plans for returning to work, it will cause a lot of anxiety.

If you have staff who already suffer from anxiety then the act of just leaving their home, prior to lockdown, can sometimes be a monumental task in itself due to the amount of over-thinking that can occur.

But for people that don't even suffer from anxiety under normal conditions, the fact that they have been inside for an extended period will mean it can feel strange to go outside again. Going back into an office, using public transport and having face to face meetings, having spent so long inside can create sensory overload for some people.

What you put into place for your business must be clear to your staff as this will help to reduce feelings of uncertainty which will therefore reduce feelings of anxiety.

- Communicate with your staff the measures you have put in place to make the environment safe
- Ensure that you have signposting to support services that you can direct your staff to
- If you have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) or Mental Health First Aiders (MHFAs) ensure they are prepared to deal with potentially more staff accessing their service

Useful resources

Our Training Team has a selection of free resources to help cope with employees who are struggling with their mental health, or returning to work following time off with mental health issues:

- Medical questionnaire
- Stress and Anxiety factsheet
- Reasonable Adjustments Guide
- Tailored Adjustment Agreement
- Stress Bucket exercise
- Wellness recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Template

Need more help? Please contact our Training Team on **01427 678 660** or email training@skaltd.co.uk to discuss the various training courses available.

COPING WITH STRESS

[Stress.org.uk](https://www.stress.org.uk) has lots of useful information about stress and how to manage it, which may be worth sharing with your employees. Their key advice includes:

- Talk about Stress and its effects – work together to reduce the stigma that is associated with stress by talking about the topic openly and freely with friends, family and colleagues.
- Share your coping mechanisms – if something has worked for you why not share it? It might benefit someone you care about and in the meantime it might help you take your focus off your own challenges.
- Be nice to those who are stressed and anxious – we are all undoubtedly going to experience stress and anxiety in our lifetime so treat others going through it with compassion and empathy.
- Look after yourself – we all need to think more about self-care. Take time out of your day to relax or do something that you enjoy. Don't forget to exercise and eat well, even when you feel too stressed.
- The most crucial thing you can do when you are stressed or anxious is to make sure you are continuing to look after yourself. Make time to relax when you need to and learn to say no to requests that are too much for you.

Mental Health at Work statistics

According to the latest reports by the Office For National Statistics (ONS), anxiety amongst adults is currently at an all time high.

However, the numbers regarding mental health issues at work have been increasing year on year, and this will inevitably only get worse during the current crisis.

- **14.7% of UK workforce experience mental health problems in the workplace**
- **Women in full time employment are twice as likely to have a mental health problem in the workplace than men**
- **Approximately 13% of all sickness absence days in the UK are related to mental health conditions**

We need to try and prevent mental ill health at work – provide EAP, Mental Health First Aiders and promote wellbeing via information advice and guidance, as this will help to reduce these statistics and lead to a cost saving for the UK economy.

Mental Health First Aider Training

Looking after your employees' mental health should be a key consideration on their return to work. If your employees don't currently have access to a Mental Health First Aider or other mental health support, now would be a good time to put something in place.

Stallard Kane have several Mental Health First Aiders, and it's created a really positive culture change within the business.

Don't have a Mental Health First Aider? Please contact our Training Team on 01427 678 660 or email training@skald.co.uk to discuss the various training courses available.

VIRTUAL COURSES TO HELP WITH WELLBEING

We have a variety of 'virtual classroom' courses we are running during the coronavirus crisis. Each one is 10 hours long (made up of 5 x 2hr sessions).

If you'd like to find out more about any of these or other training available, please contact our Training Team.

The skilled helper

An introduction to the skills needed to be a counsellor, support worker, coach or mentor.

This course will help you understand the skills needed to work with people in a support role. Learn how to effectively listen, and process information to work through to an action plan. You will look at the ethics involved within each role and professional qualifications required. The course material can be adapted for each person, for example, the care/ education/health sector

How to manage your anxiety and negative thoughts

This course will look at anxiety and how thoughts and behaviours differ. We look at the internal messages you keep in your mind and how to re-write them.

We use your own personal experiences in the course, so a conversation with the tutor ahead of starting is necessary.

Personal wellbeing and mental health

- **Routine** – create a routine each day which encourages getting up at the same time, getting dressed, working, home schooling, hobbies, exercise. A routine helps build a sense of control
- **Control** – write a list of things you can control (e.g.. hygiene procedures, social distancing) and write a list of things you can't control (e.g when the government will ease restrictions around seeing family etc). Accepting the things we can't control and concentrating on the things we can will provide a more a more consistent state of positive mental health.
- **Self-Care** – take time to understand what it is that you require in terms of self-care. Set a specific amount of time aside for this, otherwise it is easy for the time you want to dedicate to yourself to be swallowed up by other activities in the day. This could be a half an hour walk at lunchtime, reading a chapter of a book, gardening etc. But having some time just for you will allow you to replenish your emotional wellbeing and then you will be better placed to help others (you can't pour from an empty cup).
- **Healthy Habits** – eating well and exercising are important ways to help maintain a positive state of wellbeing. You could look at setting up a virtual exercise challenge with friends, family and colleagues to help encourage everyone to take part in an activity, and it also helps to create a feeling of teamwork.
- **Deep breathing** – breathing in slowly and deeply for 60 seconds encourages our bodies to release endorphins (the happy hormone) which will help us feel instantly more relaxed
- **Being grateful** – in such uncertain times it is hard to find things we are grateful or thankful for. But take the time to write down three things each day that make you grateful. This will help to improve your mood and can aid to fight off feelings of mild depression.



Find out more about Mental Health Awareness Week by downloading the Mental Health Foundation's Supporter Pack [here](#)

VIRTUAL COURSES TO HELP WITH WELLBEING

Workplace conflict – effective communication in the workplace

This course will help you understand the dynamics of effective communication. You will learn how personality types impact on the way people listen and respond. How the different generations' values and behaviours can be misunderstood in the workplace. The course material will show tips and techniques on how to manage conflict before it happens. We will adapt the course material for each person and their workplace culture and sector.

Winning ways – how confidence can be calm, yet strong

Being more confident is not about faking it. It's not about being artificial. This course will look at the person who you are and work with that, and turn your core self into a confident self.

We will look at the life scripts you carry with you and how, if challenged, you can re-write them to be strong in your own world.

Home harmony – effective communication in the home

This course will help you understand the dynamics of effective communication. You will learn how personality types impact on the way people listen and respond. The course material will show tips and techniques of managing conflict before it happens. We will adapt the course material for each person and their own household, including elderly relatives and teens.

A personal story of lockdown

Faye Bevington, our Training Manager and Mental Health First Aider, wanted to share her experiences of lockdown and what she was able to offer the teams that she currently manages.

“As I am sure most people reading this will agree, the last few months have certainly been some of the strangest times we have experienced. I had gone from an incredibly active social life of being out most nights at the gym or see-ing friends, and away three out of four weekends a month, to being ‘trapped’ in my house. I honestly felt suffocated by the thought of having to stay inside my four walls each day for a untold period of time. Everything became a struggle, getting up for work, staying focused during work, even talking to my friends and family. Being alone was one of the hardest parts of my lockdown experience and it became an all-consuming thought.

“However, one day a few weeks in to this, I read the following quote “we may all be in the same storm, but we are all sailing a different ship” and this has stayed with me and allowed me to change my attitude and therefore, I ended up having a very different lockdown experience. I stopped thinking about what others had, which I didn’t (mainly a family around them) and accepted that this was my journey and I had to accept it and make the most of it.

“I found renewed energy for work and started daily virtual coffee breaks with my staff. I poured my energy into ensuring that none of the staff I managed would experience the same levels of loneliness that I had in the first few weeks. I also set activity challenges for us all to take part in to help build teamwork, including those staff that were on furlough. At home, I have used the time to create an office space, do some DIY tasks and sort my garden out.

“My new biggest found love has been walking, living in a rural village it has allowed me to go on many long walks where there have been no people and just so much nature that I have never seen in such abundance before. With each day I walked I got faster, could go further and have lost a considerable amount of weight as a happy bi-product.

“When life returns to normal, or whatever normal is I think it is important to decide what aspects of lockdown we want to continue with. For me, it will be daily walking, it clears my head and makes me more productive in the afternoon. For others it may be that more time will be spent playing with their children, or helping them learn a new topic.

“I wanted to write this to show that everyone struggles, even those with additional MH training, but it’s about how we come through this and what this then allows us to offer others, once we are taking care of ourselves.”



“We may all be in the same storm, but we are all sailing a different ship”



HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING HR & EMPLOYMENT LAW COMPLIANCE



**Coronavirus (COVID-19):
Back in Business**

Key health, safety and HR issues to consider before your return to work

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FREE DOWNLOAD
Back in Business
Toolkit

ANY QUESTIONS?

If you would like to speak to one of the team regarding any of the subjects covered in this guide, please contact us on **01427 678 660** or email admin@skaltd.co.uk

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All Risk Assessments and other templates are meant as a guide and should be adapted accordingly to make them appropriate for your business.

one of the team