

Resource Guide for Self-Care and Employee Support (during COVID-19 Shelter-in-Place)

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Typical feelings people may experience during the shelter-in-place restrictions:

- Anxiety, worry, panic
- Sadness, depression, overwhelm, grief
- Lack of motivation, interest in many or most things
- Loss of sense of time or passing of days
- Trouble concentrating, focusing, completing tasks
- Increased irritability, anger
- Feelings of loneliness, abandonment
- Hopelessness, helplessness
- Fear of having enough food, toilet paper, daily living necessities
- Fear of going outside the home
- Loss of access to medically necessary treatment, especially for trans and gender diverse people
- Denial of the pandemic, paranoia, 'conspiracy' beliefs and concern about government
- Resistance to changes in life patterns, refusal to use personal protective equipment (masks, gloves, social distance)

Self-care suggestions:

- Get 15 minutes of direct sunlight daily.
- Go outside or open windows and breathe outside air.
- Walk, run, bike ride, or move your body any way possible for 10-15 minutes daily outside
- Stand up or stretch your body in your chair for a minute every hour - set an alarm to remind you to move.
- Take 3-5 deep breaths - slowly inhale to count of 4, hold for 2, slowly exhale to count of 6. Move your abdomen while you breathe.
- Talk to other people on the phone, virtual rooms, email, text. Reach out and ask how other people are doing frequently.
- Plan a daily schedule or routine to follow. It can be simple or detailed.
- Write down 2-3 things daily that made you smile.
- Do something creative every week; cook, sew, paint, draw, build with Lego's, alphabetize your spice cabinet, book shelf, DVD's or CD's, etc.
- Schedule group virtual gatherings with a fun purpose: colleague happy hour, friend/family game night, share recipes, cook, and eat the same meal "together."



Convey interest in your employees' mental health and wellbeing:

- Provide frequent news and updates about the workplace, business, plans.
 - Be transparent in discussing job losses, reduced pay, suspended benefits, company solvency, etc.
- Offer assurances about health insurance coverage for telehealth medical and mental health care services.
 - Offer assistance to help staff find services and supports they need.
- Invite staff to brainstorm and discuss what they need to return to work - make a return plan that is individualized if needed.
- Remind people how to connect to EAPs, E/BRGs and other supports.
- Acknowledge empathetically the possible range of emotions people may experience and offer options to get support.
- Train supervisors in active listening skills and equip them to refer employees to more supports when needed.
 - Let staff know that they can talk to supervisors or designated staff for support and guidance on getting services they need.
- Train EAP and other resources specifically in LGB and trans sensitivity and responsiveness skills
 - tell staff you did this.
 - Invite staff to tell you if they experience anything concerning so you can retrain the supports.
- Offer creative solutions for returning to work plans.
- Invite parents with children at home to help create supportive plans that consider the barriers to their returning full-time or to work outside the home due to the necessity to care for children who are home and may still be home through next fall and winter (*Note: all summer programs in the region are now closing, exceptionally few childcare programs are open for any but essential workers, and many schools are not sure they will reopen physically in the fall.*)
- Assess employee's comfort with and ability to return to work including needed supports and flexibility in scheduling.
- Evaluate what is necessary for your company to work and what is simply carrying on old ways of doing things.
 - Reassess what is truly needed to accomplish the work of the company and whether this needs people physically at the office.
 - Invite employee input on changes they have seen in their work outcomes while working from home. Some people report significant improvements in work performance since working from home. Some report decreased performance. Find out what has actually happened and adapt how you envision the work environment changing long-term.