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Aged Care Employee Day

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ON 7 AUGUST
2020!



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COPING AT HOME: REMOTE WORKPLACE WELLBEING TIPS

We know that staying at home is helping to save lives, but how is lockdown affecting your mental health?

To provide continuity of care to older Australians, most aged care workers have been required to travel to work during COVID-19 restrictions. However, many aged care employees in administrative, operational and management roles have been required to stay at home.

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) team shared these tips and suggestions to help staff stay mentally healthy while working from home.

Routine & Boundaries. It's important to demarcate between work and home life. Try to keep to normal sleep/wake times and maintain an exercise routine. Switch on your work mindset by showering and dressing for work in the morning. At the end of your workday, give yourself the signal to switch off by changing into your home clothes.

Flexibility for Working Parents. If your kids are learning from home, cut yourself some slack—this is not easy! The extra responsibility of supporting your kids with remote learning may bring up emotions or anxiety for some working parents. Communicate with both the school and your workplace to receive support.

Fresh Air & Exercise. Incorporate exercise to keep the blues at bay. Replace gym visits and work commuting with walking breaks and simple home exercises (e.g. squats, push-ups, yoga). If you're constantly sitting in front of the computer, break up the day with a short walk in the fresh air (e.g. 20 minutes in the morning and at lunchtime). Involving kids and pets can help minimise cabin fever for everyone.

Stay Connected. Humans are social beings, so staying in touch with family and friends is important. Connect with at least two friends a week via video chat. A 10-minute coffee chat up will do the trick, but make sure you can both see each other. Eye contact is key to meaningful human connection.

Limit Exposure to News. It's natural to feel some anxiety about how our lives have been changed by COVID-19. However, people living with anxiety and depression may be particularly triggered during a crisis. Manage your exposure to social media and only read Coronavirus updates from Government sources, at limited times during the day (e.g. 15 minutes at 10am and 15 minutes at 2pm). When chatting with others, find positive points to focus on (e.g. sharing small wins, new projects, even a daily joke). However, do not ignore

warning signs such as invasive thoughts or emotions. Talk to someone you trust—a friend or family member, your GP or your EAP provider.

Stepping Up as a Remote Manager. Managers, get to know your staff over video conferencing, particularly their communication nuances. Video conferencing has enabled business to continue through the COVID-19 crisis. However, this mode of communication can be fraught with errors. Managers need to be clearer and more explicit in communicating expectations and feedback; more empathetic and flexible regarding what your staff are dealing with at home; and more available for regular check-ins, to help keep your staff on track and ensure that they are coping.

R U OK? Keep an eye on your loved ones and co-workers. If, for whatever reason, you or your colleague is uncomfortable with video chat, then have a good old-fashioned phone call. Make it 1:1 and be a good listener. It's okay to not be okay but talking about your feelings almost always helps. Make regular check-ins part of your routine, to help maintain a mentally healthy workplace while working from home. ■

Anna Pannuzzo is Director, WorkplacePLUS.

For more information visit www.workplaceplus.com.au

If you or someone you know is in need of immediate assistance visit 1010.org.au/need-help/ for 24/7 crisis services within Australia.

