



Top tips for looking after your mental health at work

Take a look at five things that can support you in the constantly changing working world.

SmartHealth



Flexible working

Flexible working is reaching new heights. According to the CIPD, it allows you to **be your best, working where and when suits your situation**. Whether you've taken on caring responsibilities, are responding to family emergencies or are just juggling everyday life, the flexibility allows you to fit **self-care and the changing demands on your time** round the 9-5¹.

Things like **staggering start times** to avoid travelling during busy periods and regular **mental health check-ins** can make sure wellbeing is protected². It's important to ensure the boundaries between work and home don't become too blurred. Linda Agnew, one of the vocational rehabilitation specialists we work with at Proclaim Care, suggests that **setting a routine** that works for you is vital - whatever the start or finish time may be. Make sure there's clear distinction between personal and professional time.

¹CIPD, April 2020

² CIPD, June 2020



Internal communications

Keeping informed is more important now than ever before. Insight from the Institute of Internal Communication highlights that **trust in an organisation is a key factor** in ensuring uncertainty doesn't impact on mental wellbeing¹. Using **other resources you have to stay well** is really important, with wellbeing benefits a top priority². There might be an **intranet page** with all the information you need, or maybe an existing newsletter.

How you communicate with your colleagues is also something to consider. Whilst emails are popular, could another way work better? More and more companies are using **video and conference calls**, with 92% rating it effective or very effective - helping replace some of the normal face-to-face contact with teammates³.

¹Institute of Internal Communication, May 2020

²COVID-19 Benefits Survey Report – UK, May 2020

³IoIC Covid-19 survey: trust, influence and cutting through the noise, March/April 2020



Line managers

If you're a people manager, now is an important time to make sure you feel comfortable in looking after your teams. Almost **half of all UK managers aren't trained on managing mental health in the workplace**¹, so make sure you're familiar with the early signs of a mental health problem. Here's some proactive **guidance** from the CIPD on how to step in before an issue gets worse. Encourage your team to taking time out for mental health and **engaging with wellbeing services**.

It's also key that **conversations extend beyond just work**. The 'how was your weekend?' or 'what are you having for tea?' chats might not seem like much, but **small actions** like this can be what binds a team together. Catching up socially once or twice a week can help **boost morale and wellbeing**, ensuring no-one goes a whole working day with no social interaction².

Linda from Proclaim Care suggests setting up informal chat groups between people you'd normally speak to at work, whether it's on Whatsapp or an internal messenger.

¹Chartered Management Institute, April 2020

²employeebenefits.co.uk, March 2020



Healthy working habits

The basic guidance on making sure you are happy and healthy at work hasn't changed. Mind¹ suggest making sure **working spaces and desks are fit for purpose**, carrying out a **DSE assessment**, **taking regular breaks**, having a positive **work/life balance** and getting outside in to the fresh air during the working day. They might seem like small steps, but they all add up.

Laura Scarone Bonhomme, lead psychologist at Teladoc Health, also shares the importance of **introducing mindfulness** and balance in to our working day. You'll probably find that many of your **existing employee benefits** offer mental health support, but there's also loads of free resources out there too to help with relaxation and mindfulness - such as **Headspace**.

¹Mental health at work commitment guide for employers during coronavirus, last checked December 2020



Annual leave

Normally, around 40% of UK workers take less than half their leave¹ - you might be tempted to power through and not take a break. 'Holiday' doesn't just have to mean jetting off abroad, so **remember to use your allowance**, whether it's a mid-week day off, a long weekend or a longer break. Regular time away from the desk can equal **improved productivity and a happier, more relaxed workforce**¹.

¹employeebenefits.co.uk, April 2020

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