

SURVIVE & THRIVE

# Employee Wellbeing TOOLKIT

*Strategies for managing mental wellbeing, navigating stress and building resilience*



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## Managing wellbeing during times of crisis

Employees around the world are riding an emotional rollercoaster as they navigate disruption, balance work and family demands, and face fears of layoffs or salary reductions.

Organisations can help their employees feel and perform at their best, by providing resources to prevent and manage stress, anxiety and depression.

This toolkit contains top tips and resources to help employees develop the mindset and behaviours needed to navigate through uncertainty, maintain high performance and develop new skills for the future.

“

*Clients do not come first. Employees come first. If you take care of your employees, they will take care of the clients.*

”

*Richard Branson*

# Employer Perspective



# Practical steps organisations can take to support employee wellbeing

*Stress, doubt and anxiety can be just as contagious as COVID-19 itself. It is important for organisations to help employees manage their overall wellbeing, particularly during these challenging times.*

Solutions needn't be expensive. Take advantage of your existing resources and memberships (e.g. medical insurance programmes), utilise the fantastic resources available online (many of them are free), and encourage experts from within your organisation to host online sessions and workshops. There are also firms specialising in employee wellbeing, so reach out to them if you need additional support. We've included some suggestions below to get you started.



**TOP TIP:** Consider implementing a weekly employee wellbeing newsletter or emailer – break information into bite-sized' chunks so that it is easier to absorb.

## PHYSICAL



As old routines are disrupted, remind employees how important it is to engage in regular exercise.

- ✓ Make online workout solutions available to your employees
- ✓ Use corporate wellbeing apps
- ✓ Launch a corporate fitness challenge

## SOCIAL



Make a concerted effort to ensure that employees don't feel isolated and that they maintain a strong sense of purpose.

- ✓ Use video technology for virtual meetings
- ✓ Encourage verbal communication and feedback (rather than overusing emails)
- ✓ Host virtual coffee or lunch meetings
- ✓ Hold fun competitions like 'Team Quiz' challenges
- ✓ Implement social networking platforms (e.g. Workplace by Facebook or Yammer)

## FINANCIAL



This is a challenging time for everybody and managing personal finances will be a top priority for employees.

- ✓ Host an online 'Personal Financial Management' workshop
- ✓ Develop a 'Financial Wellbeing' toolkit and provide relevant templates (e.g. personal cashflow planning)
- ✓ Share links to technology that can support employees (e.g. the Well One Money App)
- ✓ Remind employees about any rewards programmes or discount platforms that your organisation subscribes to

## MENTAL & EMOTIONAL



Help your employees build mental and emotional resilience and provide tips for balancing work and home life.

- ✓ Remind employees about existing support services (e.g. medical insurance benefits)
- ✓ Offer access to counselling and bereavement services
- ✓ Host online workshops
- ✓ Develop 'Mental Wellbeing' toolkits and tip sheets
- ✓ Upskill leaders and managers on emotional intelligence
- ✓ Promote apps like Headspace
- ✓ Provide best-practice tips on remote working practices

*Looking after the psychological wellbeing of frontline employees is essential during these challenging times. Here are some of the ways that you can help them prepare and cope with the emotional impact of COVID-19.*



## Wellbeing measures

### BE PROACTIVE AND MAKE TIME TO TALK ABOUT HOW EMPLOYEES ARE FEELING

Employees often hide mental health problems because of worries that they are letting people down by 'not coping'. Provide empathetic communication to staff acknowledging their fears and anxieties, together with messages on recognising the signs of distress.

### ENCOURAGE OPEN AND HONEST CONVERSATIONS

Employees need to be encouraged to speak up when feeling overwhelmed or in need. Create safe spaces for them to talk about their mental health.

### PUT EASILY ACCESSIBLE SUPPORT STRUCTURES IN PLACE

Employees should know where they can go and who they can talk to about any difficulties or concerns they might have. This could be a trusted internal resource (e.g. HR Manager) or an external professional (e.g. Organisational Psychologist). Crucially, there should be no threshold or qualifying conditions to access this support.

### ACKNOWLEDGE AND CELEBRATE THE ESSENTIAL WORK THAT FRONTLINE EMPLOYEES ARE UNDERTAKING

Constantly thank and acknowledge your frontline employees for their hard work and the positive impact and difference that they are making during this crisis.

## Workplace health and safety measures

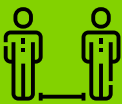
*Organisations should be doing everything that they can to make workplaces safe - for both frontline workers and those returning to work as lockdown restrictions start to ease.*



Develop and communicate clear guidelines to keep your employees and customers safe



Provide adequate protective equipment (face masks, gloves and sanitiser / soap)



Practice social distancing in the workplace (e.g. two meters apart in break rooms and common areas)



Provide cleaning supplies for employees to wash their workspaces throughout the day



Provide regular health and safety updates



Stagger work schedules, to reduce the number of people in the workplace at a given time



Discourage employees from using each other's equipment and phones



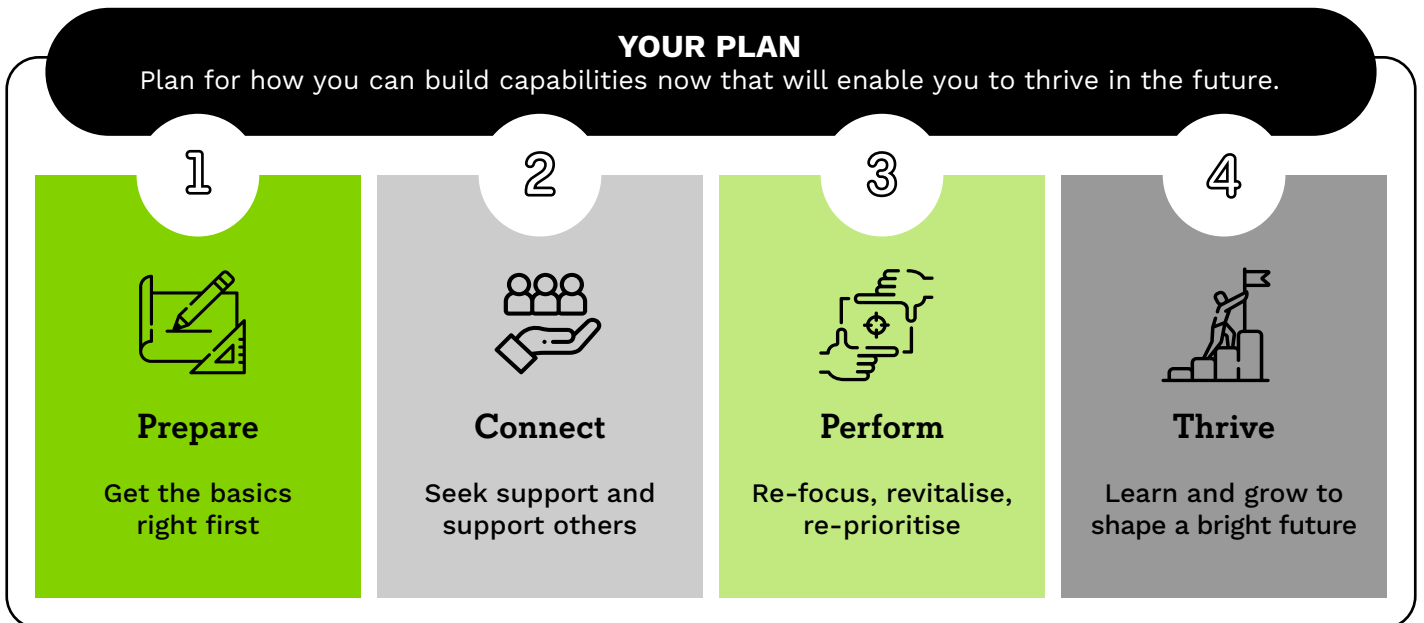
Ensure customers and the public are aware of your safety precautions

# Employee Perspective



## 4 Steps to maintain personal wellbeing, focus and productivity

*The four-step process below can help you maintain your wellbeing, focus and productivity in times of crisis ...*



### 1. Prepare

Take the time to set yourself up to be as effective as possible. That includes your mindset, environment and wellbeing.

#### TOP TIPS

- ✓ Make a commitment to your physical and mental wellbeing
- ✓ Reflect on times when you have been resilient, what helped you to bounce back?
- ✓ When working from home, create a space to work that is as free from distractions as possible
- ✓ Get up to date with the technologies that support remote working
- ✓ Set boundaries for yourself (e.g. establish a daily routine)
- ✓ Chunk your day so that you can better manage family demands and work
- ✓ Set boundaries with others (resist distractions)
- ✓ Set realistic goals each day and make them visible – write them down and tick them off

### 2. Connect

In times of uncertainty and concern, we all have a role to play in keeping connections alive and being a source of mutual support.

#### TOP TIPS

- ✓ Increase connection through multiple touchpoints. Don't over rely on email – pick up the phone and have regular meetings
- ✓ Go on video during meetings
- ✓ Say a quick virtual 'hello' to everyone on your team every morning
- ✓ Let people know what you are working on and share progress and milestones
- ✓ Practice empathy and kindness and know that everyone is working with a different set of challenges
- ✓ Schedule virtual coffee breaks with colleagues
- ✓ Share and celebrate personal and team successes
- ✓ Be part of the solution: reach out and offer help and support within and across your team



## 4 Steps to maintain personal wellbeing, focus and productivity (continued)

### 3. Perform

Navigating the speed and scale of change in such uncertain times requires agility. Continually evaluate your personal effectiveness and experiment with new ways of working.

#### TOP TIPS

- ✓ Plan your work around the resources that are available to you
- ✓ Remember your organisation's purpose – set daily personal priorities aligned to your team's purpose
- ✓ Ensure you are clear on the new objectives for yourself and the team
- ✓ Be realistic, and do not expect to maintain 100% productivity
- ✓ Clarify the new rules of engagement with colleagues in your team, how and when you will communicate with each other
- ✓ If in doubt, over communicate rather than under communicate
- ✓ Master virtual technologies
- ✓ Think about how you need to change the way you work to meet new demands
- ✓ Maintain a balance between your work and home/family commitments

### 4. Thrive

Aim to combine positivity with realism. Be prepared, rational and confident. There is disruption now but there will also be recovery.

#### TOP TIPS

- ✓ Practice thought awareness. Don't let negative thoughts derail your efforts
- ✓ Maintain a balanced perspective, focus on the positives as well as the challenges
- ✓ Set SMART, effective personal goals
- ✓ Practice gratitude – recognise one good thing that happened today
- ✓ Practice mindfulness/meditation – and limit the amount of news you consume
- ✓ Let go of what you can't control, and focus on what you are able to influence
- ✓ Focus on your values instead of your fears – remind yourself of what is important in life
- ✓ Accept the present but keep looking to the future

Source: AstraZeneca



*According to bestselling author and Harvard Medical School psychologist, Dr. Susan David, emotional agility is marked by an individual's ability to experience his/her thoughts, emotions, and experiences in a way that doesn't drive them in negative ways, but instead encourages them to reveal the best of themselves.*

*By learning (and fostering) the emotional agility journey, we can empower ourselves to manage stress, increase productivity, and be the best version of ourselves.*



### Show Up

The first step is acknowledging emotions and stresses as they occur – not to dwell on them, but to learn. What am I feeling right now? What does this say about my values? An emotionally agile person is able to recognise their feelings with self-compassion and understanding. Don't bottle up your emotions or brood.



### Step Out

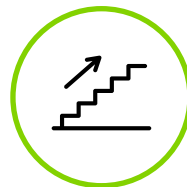
Stepping out means specifically labelling the problem. In order for managers and HR professionals to provide support to individuals, or individuals to support themselves, there needs to be an accurate understanding of the problem. Once a stressful situation is acknowledged, it's much easier to create an action plan to move forward.



### Walk Your Why

Walking your 'why' involves self-identifying values. Even in times where we are right and wrong, we still have the capacity to make choices that are values-aligned. It is important for individuals to reflect, "Even in the context of all this change, who do I want to be? Is it important for me to be a contributor? A collaborator? An innovator?"

When we move towards our values and can make choices that align us with who we want to be, it is incredibly empowering, and provides a new found sense of autonomy in difficult situations.



### Move On

Once you've unpacked what you're feeling, why you're feeling that way, and aligned your next steps with who you want to be in the situation, it's time to move on and take action. Emotionally agile individuals, handle situations as they come up, feel them fully, make a plan, and don't delay.

Emotional agility is both a practical set of tools and a means of building resilience. It's a pathway where individuals can better manage their stress and learn to become more comfortable with feeling uncomfortable. Whether it's in the workplace or in personal situations, emotional agility provides the framework for people to think about who they want to be in difficult situations, and then become that person.

For more information please contact:



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