

Leader as Coach:

Ways that Leaders Can Support and Address Employee Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond

Every organization. Every employee. Every organization should become comfortable addressing employee mental health – millions of regular people are affected by mental illness, so it is important to recognize how very common this issue is and address it as a normal part of “business.”

Tip #1: Throughout our leadership careers, we’ve all heard this advice: **Lead by Example.** Normalize talking about mental health. Be mindful of the example that you’re setting. Your actions and statements will be repeated many times over by your employees.

Tip #2: Spread some positivity at work. Dedicate your energy to **reframing negative situations.** Become aware of the thoughts you have in various situations. Look for patterns. Challenge yourself to figure out why you have negative thoughts. Work to reframe and find something positive about the situation.

Tip #3: Remind your employees of resources available both through work, and in your Community.

Tip #4: Provide skill development for leaders; specifically in the area of empathic leadership and communication. Empathy is a trait that allows leaders to more deeply understand and connect with their team members. Helping leaders hone their ability to genuinely connect and then communicate effectively with, their team will ensure that there is mutual trust and understanding. Once there is trust, communication, and understanding, only then are leaders/employers are a position to really help their employees.

Tip #5: Encourage employees to get up and move. There is a strong link between mental health and movement. Talk walking meetings; meet up outside (following all safety precautions!) and walk together. Help employees set up standing desks. Challenge your team to a “steps contest” for fun.

Tip #6: Provide employees with training and growth opportunities. Bring in guest speakers; focus on sessions that help employees hone their skills in time management, stress management, and other soft skills that benefit the employee both at work, and in their personal lives.

Tip #7: Encourage employees to “take charge of their time.” Wherever possible, allow employees to select their own schedule, encourage employees to use their vacation time, or take personal time off to care for themselves and those that they love.

10 Phrases that Boost & Encourage Positivity:

1. I'm so happy to see you today.
2. I have been looking forward to working with you on this.
3. I always feel so [productive] when we work together.
4. I really admire the way you handled [that].
5. I am here to support you.
6. What is one thing that I can do to help you today?
7. I love the way you responded to [that challenge]!
8. I can tell that was hard work for you. Way to work it out!
9. Thank you for lending a hand with [this project]. I honestly couldn't have done it without you.
10. That was my fault. Can we try again?

For additional support and resources for building a caring and nurturing culture within your organization, contact your HR consultant, *Niki Ramirez*, at (602-) 715-1300 or nramirez@HRAnswers.org

