# Workplace Wellness
Programmes

Evidence–based Mental Health Solutions
for Modern Teams

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THERAPY FOR ALL

Creating a Mentally Hybrid Workplace in Five Steps

The coronavirus pandemic brought about considerable changes in the way we work. As the adoption of the hybrid model becomes more widespread, managers across the globe are learning as they go. It has become apparent that leading a hybrid team requires a distinctive leadership style that requires new organisational wellbeing considerations[1]. Thankfully with mental health being in the spotlight now more than ever before, we have a unique opportunity to build workplaces that put employee wellbeing at the forefront. Here are five steps towards creating a mentally healthy hybrid workplace.

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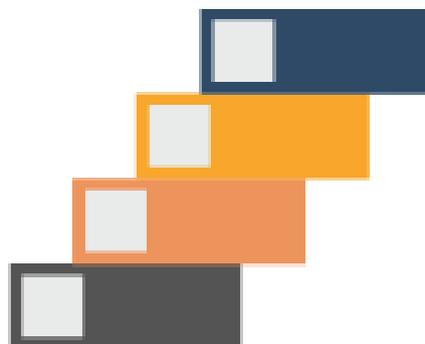
[1] Deloitte. (2020). *Covid-19 leadership styles*. Deloitte. Retrieved January 12, 2022, from https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/de/Documents/human-capital-consulting/COVID19_Leadership_Styles.pdf

1. Recognise the indicators of low wellbeing:

In the hybrid working environment, it's crucial that managers can recognise when an employee's mental health is languishing. Of course, this isn't easy to spot when team members are working remotely, but there are some key signs to look out for in your employees:

- Change behaviour or mood

- Easily angered or irritated

- Withdrawing from social interactions

- Lacking the motivation to complete tasks

- Appearing tired or anxious

- Drop-in productivity

- Recurring out-of-character mistakes

- Tiredness and anxiousness[2]

If any of your team is displaying any of the above signs, it could indicate that their wellbeing is declining and that they require additional assistance and support. Support can be provided through access to an employee assistance program (EAP) or check-ins with HR or their manager to determine how the organisation can assist them.

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[2] Mayo Clinic Staff. (2021, June 5). *Know the signs of Job Burnout*. Mayo Clinic. Retrieved January 12, 2022, from https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/burnout/art-20046642.

2.   Keep Connected

Loneliness has a massive impact on our mental health[3]. We know that isolation has been a big struggle for many employees through the pandemic[4]. As we move into more hybrid ways of working, leaders should ensure it remains easy for employees to connect remotely. Reflect on creative ways of connecting the team by organising virtual coffee mornings where everyone can catch up. Designate work in a collaborative manner where the team can brainstorm ideas and link in together regularly. You can also encourage your team to get creative and come up with solutions that work for them - remember, one size does not fit all!

3. Promote a healthy work-life balance

Often overworking is worn as a badge of honour in workplaces, but it sets a dangerous precedent. When we compromise our self-care, this can lead to burnout and illness[5]. Remember to lead by example when setting boundaries around your work by making sure to get adequate rest and breaks. For example, managers should resist sending emails out of hours and encourage a culture where investing in one's mental health is valued.

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[3] American Psychological Association. (2019). *The risks of social isolation.* Monitor on Psychology. Retrieved January 12, 2022, from https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/05/ce-corner-isolation

[4] Clark, T. R. (2021, February 1). *8 ways to manage your team while social distancing.* Harvard Business Review. Retrieved January 12, 2022, from https://hbr.org/2020/03/8-ways-to-manage-your-team-while-social-distancing

[5] Butler, L. D., Mercer, K. A., McClain-Meeder, K., Horne, D. M., & Dudley, M. (2019). Six domains of self-care: Attending to the whole person. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, *29*(1), 107–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2018.1482483

Mental wellbeing should be normalized just as much as physical wellbeing if we want our team to thrive at work and in their personal lives. Living with Covid-19 and overcoming the events of the last two years, it is important now than ever to create a culture where vulnerability is promoted, and it's okay to talk about our life stressors and feelings. By opening a dialogue around mental health, you will make your team feel supported at work. Managers can do this by sharing their struggles, allowing time off for therapy appointments and mental health days while ensuring they embrace consistent discussions around mental health throughout the year[6].

4. Provide clear communication to teams

We frequently hear about the negatives of social constraints and how they alter people's confidence and belief in themselves. However, social constraints guide many of us in our daily lives. They keep us on track, make us accountable for our performance, and allow us to collaborate and work with others. When staff work from home, there should still be some social constraints in place. When emailing or messaging staff refrain from using informal language or becoming overly relaxed about deadlines, time-frames may need to be extended due to external factors such as lack of access to equipment, but they cannot cease to exist! It is important to note that we are trying

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[6] CIPD in collaboration with Mind. (2018). *People managers' guide to mental health.* . Mental health at work- CIPD. Retrieved January 12, 2022, from https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/mental-health-at-work-1_tcm18-10567.pdf
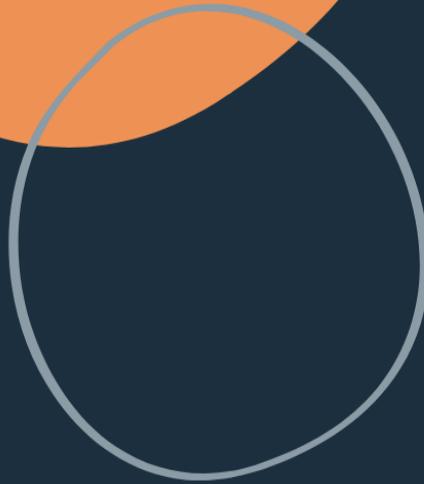
to conserve our work habits and flow. The change to home working is already an extensive alteration to our routines, so let's try to save as many as possible.

5. Increase your focus on wellbeing programmes

One of the most significant changes we have seen during the pandemic has been the increase of wellbeing programs being rolled out across different sectors[7]. Even as restrictions ease, the mental health and wellbeing of employees should remain a key concern as organisations continue to integrate into the hybrid working model longer term. Businesses can do so by arranging one-to-one check in's with staff or by holding mental health awareness workshops and events to help create an environment where employees are able to discuss their wellbeing or seek support should they need it. Also, make sure your workforce has access to employee assistance programmes, which will give them the support necessary to address personal or professional problems that may be impacting their mental health.

[7] CIPD. (2021). *Health and Wellbeing at work 2021: Survey report - CIPD*. Health and Wellbeing at Work. . Retrieved January 12, 2022, from https://www.cipd.co.uk/Images/health-wellbeing-work-report-2021_tcm18-93541.pdf

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