

Pandemic Pressure



COVID-19's
Impact on
Human
Resources

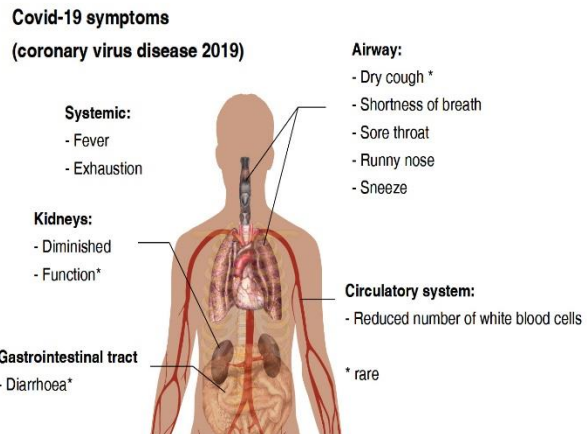
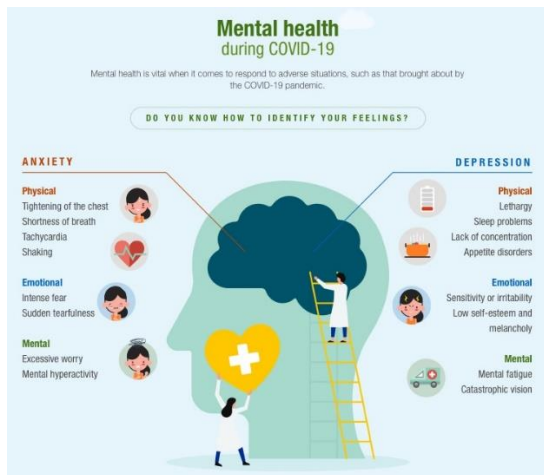


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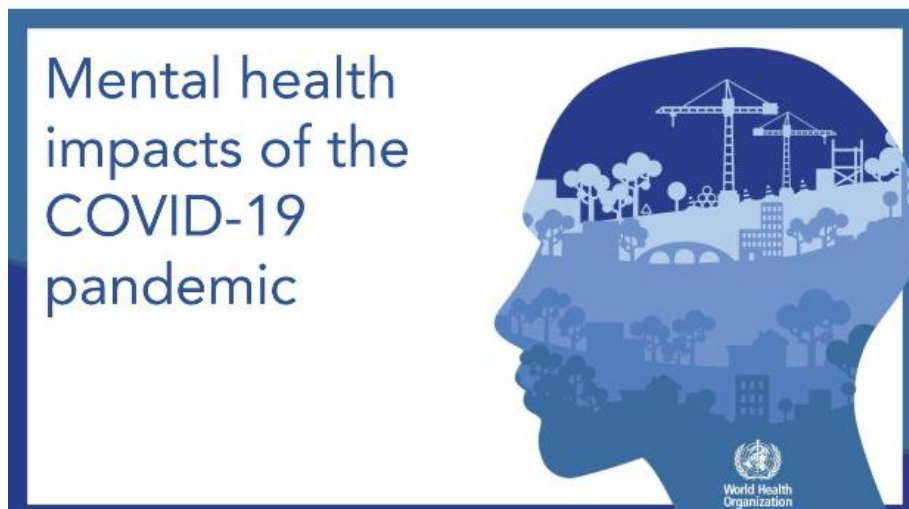
HR Magazine

April 2022

COVID-19's ramifications in the workplace go well beyond the financial and bodily damages we've all experienced in the last year. Since the epidemic began, four out of ten individuals in the world have experienced symptoms of anxiety, sadness, and other detrimental effects on their mental health and well-being. Along with these mounting psychological problems have come a slew of medical and addiction-related issues, including difficulty eating, insomnia, grief-induced weight gain/loss, loneliness, unhealthily increased alcohol consumption, and a worsening of pre-existing chronic conditions exacerbated by high stress and constant worry.



The day-to-day perils of deskless work plod endlessly on for first responders, transportation professionals, restaurant employees, and those in manufacturing retail occupations, much like the workers themselves, in a fog of repressed anxiety and mainly unsaid necessity. Without daily connections with co-workers and senior management to fall back on, many deskless and frontline employees are affected twice as hard by practical and emotional pandemic-related stresses. This is where an important and continuing dialogue about mental health at work makes its most strident call for an active, continuous conversation rather than a band-aid solution.



The obligation of having such a dialogue and all its attendant concerns falls mostly on HR departments. Many conventional HR professions have evolved from basic recruiting and onboarding to practically full-time counselling, wellness management, and life-obstacle coaching because of the shift to remote work. This year, HR professionals have been tasked with a wide range of disruptions, including assisting employees in finding babysitters, developing, and implementing flexible scheduling that can change at the drop of a hat, and generally attempting to maintain some sense of normalcy in a world that has become increasingly anything but. Many HR departments are weary because of this transition, and their firms are wrestling with the need for systematic mental health solutions that can be permanently implemented within their professional environments.



Four ways HR may help employees with their mental health

Promote mental Health in office
Provide tools to workers to assist them to understand more about mental health and disease, as well as how employees who are struggling may obtain support.

Offer Flexible Scheduling
Work-life balance, or its absence, can have an impact on an employee's mental health. Employees benefit from flexible schedules in terms of job satisfaction, improved health, higher work-life balance, and less stress.

Address Workplace Stress
Employee weariness, irritation, and health problems can all be exacerbated by chronic working stress.



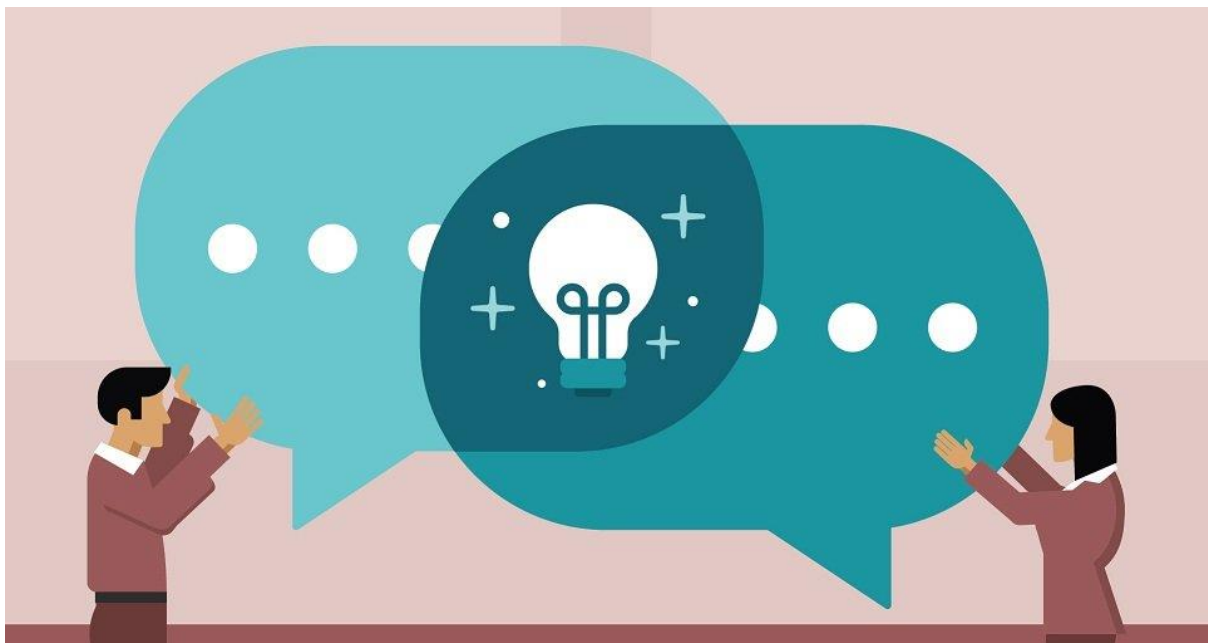
Evaluate Benefit Offering
Examine the perks you provide to ensure they promote mental health. Examine your present health-care plans.

According to a survey conducted by Oracle and the HR research and advice business Workplace Intelligence, companies are beginning to emphasize mental wellness. Approximately 51% of employees polled said their firm had increased mental health support. Having said that, 76% believe their employer can do more. Large corporations, such as Target, have introduced full-scale mental health services for their employees, but there are an increasing number of solutions for smaller organizations with limited finances as technology catches up with the special problems raised by COVID-19. Making the employee communications experience a fluid and two-way communication route is one of the most critical aspects of boosting mental health at any size firm.

Two Way Communication

The importance of two-way, open communication between employees and senior management cannot be stressed. The pandemic's alterations have just highlighted that requirement in a way that no organization, large or little, can ignore. While there is substantial discussion among employees and upper-level management about the necessity for raw, unedited truth-sharing, there is less consensus on how to go about it. Many businesses are dealing with both top-down and bottom-up worry messages. Here are a few common and relatively simple improvements that HR departments and other company executives may do to create a secure two-way communication area for employees and administrators alike:

1. Make available a variety of feedback channels, including anonymous, private consultation, digital, and group-based input.
2. Ensure that all issues voiced by any party are addressed. When instructing, be constructive: make any necessary improvements in a playful but explicit manner.
3. Establish frequent interdepartmental ties by discussing both grievances and accomplishments.



Over the next several years, HR professionals may spend a considerable amount of their day implementing practical initiatives inside the company's staff architecture that allow for more free and open mental health dialogue. The establishment of internal course correctives such as anonymous stressor drop boxes where employees feel safe to share distinctly workplace-related mental health problems with administration, the implementation of internal childcare, and the permanent shift to more malleable scheduling

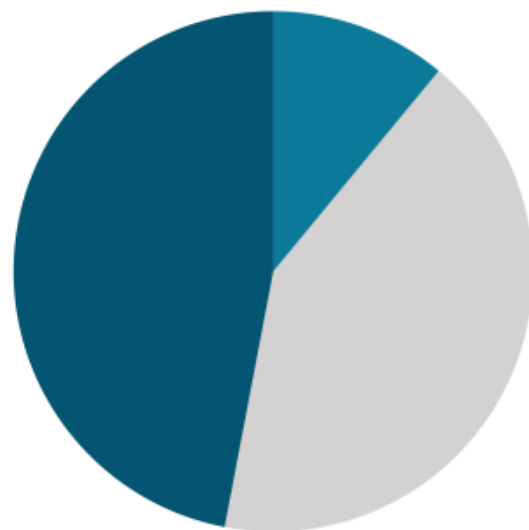
are all examples of new responsibilities HR departments may face when looking for long-term mental health solutions post-pandemic.

The future of the HR business will be exponentially more responsive to each employee's particular health demands. There's a significant potential for forward-thinking organizations to start giving customized mental health packages as part of the recruiting process for every position, like how medical and dental benefits are currently handled.

Mental health awareness

More than half of employees say they don't know if their company offers mental well-being programs or that no support is available

- No idea what employer offers, 11%
- No support or programs available, 42%
- Support and programs available, 47%



Source: Workplace Options

In the middle of all of this, HR departments must create pathways to resilience not only for their employees but also for themselves. This might range from the formation of intracompany HR committees to the complete redesigning of existing HR functions. HR professionals improve their journeys by expanding communication channels targeted at boosting employee journeys. HR can evolve in ways that both sustain and multiply its vitality inside any firm by making better use of social capital, excellent leadership, and comprehensive work-life policy advances. Though most of these adjustments may appear to be burdensome, strange, and even off-putting at first, the good influence that can be constructed out of COVID-19's negative repercussions is one that prioritizes everyone's best interests.

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

