Working from home during the Covid-19 Pandemic – Managers

As businesses work to contain the spread of the Coronavirus, protect their employees and adhere to government advice, more and more employees will work remotely or from home. This may sound like a good solution, and some may even prefer it. Others may find certain aspects challenging. For instance, some may find it isolating and miss the office chats, and some may find it difficult to motivate themselves while they continue to worry about what the future holds.

Tips to support your employees when working from home:

1. Communicate, communicate, this is key to ensure that working from home is successful. Communicate clearly the expected deadlines, tasks, and regular contact. Communicate that the channels are open so that employees let you know if they have challenges and ask how you can support them.

2. Create a structure for employees or encourage them to have a structure; this helps with focus and motivation. Allowing people to develop their own structure allows them to feel in control. For example, some people like to work early 6 am, and others prefer to focus on tasks that require concentration later in the day.

3. Set boundaries. Just because your people are working from home, they should not be "at work" or "on-call" for longer than their normal work day. Practices such as sending email/requests within business hours can assist with this.

4. Many organisations require that the work area has appropriate lighting and ergonomic positioning, not the bed or couch. Discuss what that means for the nature of particular work roles with your people.

5. Encourage a "dress code" as this psychologically prepares people for work, putting them in the headspace for work. Relaxed, smart casual rather than pyjamas or tracksuits.

6. Ask your employees what they are working on and what their goal is for the day, this provides structure but also reassurance for both manager and employee.

7. Model taking breaks away from the computer as you would at work, encourage proper lunch breaks and /or exercise.

8. Encourage connecting regularly with colleagues during breaks via phone calls, video or facetime chats. It's important to talk about the Coronavirus but to keep to the facts. Encourage employees and colleagues if they are working from home to minimise their exposure to the news and media to certain times. Being alone and constant exposure will impact on employees wellbeing and needs to be monitored.

9. Have team meetings via video or teleconference. Video works particularly well as you can see each other and respond to verbal and body language cues.

10. Depending on the team or individuals set up a buddy system where colleagues check in or support one another. It's important to keep each other on track or help each other if someone is struggling. When employees cannot see each other they may feel hesitant to interrupt but it is important, so no one struggles on their own or feels isolated.

If you have any further questions or would like to discuss specific requirements on how AccessEAP can assist your organisation and your people, please contact your Relationship Manager or the Manager Support Hotline. As always, as your EAP we are here to support your people whatever the nature of their concerns, please contact **AccessEAP** on **1800 818 728**.