

Strategizing Flex Work

Supporting Employee Mental Well-Being

Managers can take four key actions to build a safe place and ensure mental well-being for employees who work remote.

1. Training to sense verbal and non-verbal signs of stress
2. Enabled responses to mental health issues
3. Empower employees with trust, freedom and flexibility
4. Continue cultural rituals and peer learning



Training to Sense Verbal and Non-Verbal Signs of Stress

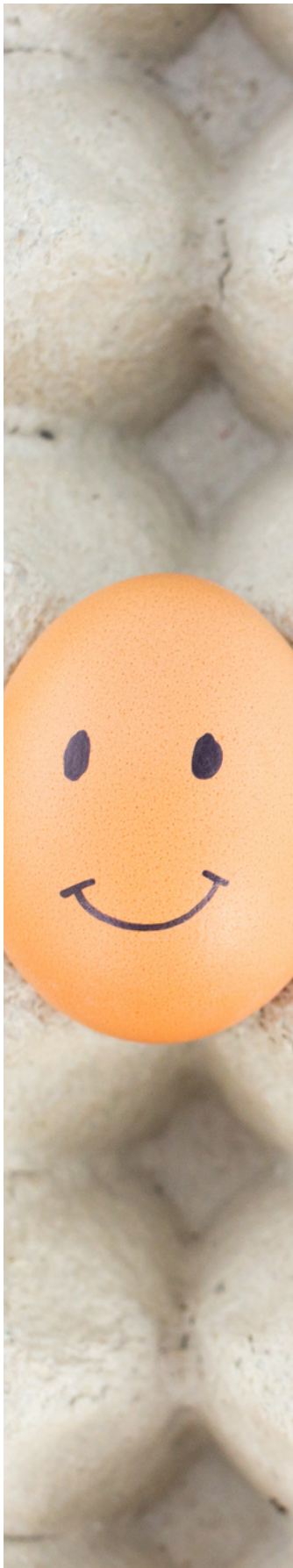
- Practice empathy in your virtual check-ins with employees and pay attention to their tone of voice, facial expressions, and context to gauge how the employees are feeling as they speak.
- Focus on other signs such as reduced participation in team meetings, resistance to adapt to process change, procrastination, to understand an individual's state of mind. Look for disconnection.
- Avoid making assumptions, jumping to conclusions, or changing the subject, when an employee voices a concern.



Enable Responses to Mental Health Issues

- Provide information and support from [ASAP](#)
- Consider mental health just as relevant as, and a component of, physical health. Check for any personal biases you may have.
- Recommended Reading:
 - PDF [Supporting Mental Health of Employees During and After COVID-19](#)
 - General: Gallup: [The Emotional State of Remote Workers: It's Complicated](#)





Empower Employees with Trust, Choice and Flexibility

- Have a conversation about successfully meeting the needs of the operation while simultaneously supporting the needs of the employee.
- Consider that consistently high-performers possess the time-management and strategizing skills to optimize their own work and workflows and provide them the freedom for flex so they can best choose how to succeed. ***Autonomy is a powerful motivator.***
- Clarify to employees when they are and are not expected to be working or available. This allows for decompression.
- Clarify communication methods and expectations.
- Avoid micro-management and “raising the bar” of expectations, making sure they are on-par with non-remote work expectations.
- Model work-life boundary setting and a remote-friendly culture through behaviors and actions. Avoid communications during “off-work” time.

Continue Cultural Rituals and Peer Learning

- Organizational culture should support managers in keeping team activities alive, such as celebrating birthdays, work anniversaries and farewells, as well as hosting team engagement/creativity events.
- Create opportunities for informal interactions among remote employees by providing them with platforms for setting up virtual breakout spaces which can help maintain the social connection among isolated employees.
- If possible, establish regular in-person meetings where all team members are physically in the same room. For example, have one of the four regular weekly team meetings each month at a physical site or with a primarily remote team, a quarterly meeting.
- Encourage peer learning as it can be another great channel to sustain social interactions among remote workforce.
- If possible, encourage one-on-one work between different team members and step aside only offering advice and feedback. This builds relationships between team members and encourages creativity.
- Encourage healthy behaviors, bodies and minds through [Healthy UC Davis](#)