

# Mental Health

## Best Practices for Employees

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**As many are focused on physical health during this pandemic, we cannot forget that mental health plays a key factor in our overall wellbeing.**

Being away from family and friends as we socially distance and stay home has increased feelings of anxiety, sadness, and loneliness as we do our part in flattening the curve.

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What's important to remember is that the entire world population is collectively going through this experience, so you are not alone.

To get through this time, we wanted to share some best practices that we have gathered through research and safety experts, to help you cope and come out of this situation stronger.

### 1. Avoid too much information

- An abundance of information is coming to us from multiple sources and platforms on a daily basis, and it's no surprise that this leaves many feeling overwhelmed and stressed. For this reason, it's vital to limit your intake of information by focusing on a few key platforms that you trust, which will present you with the facts.
- Depending on what makes you comfortable, develop a certain cadence for checking the news whether it is every morning, once a week, or on a need to know basis. This may mean turning off notifications for certain platforms or altering them to match your preferred schedule.

### 2. Practice mindfulness and gratitude

- Looking at the big picture and staying mindful can truly help alleviate stress and shift your perspective during this time. Think about it. Most of our thoughts consist of the future or the past, and what mindfulness does is help us focus on the present moment. By focusing on the present moment, you will be able to shift your attention and worry less.
- Focusing on the positives is also essential during this pandemic. Starting your day by vocalizing or writing down one or more things you are grateful for can alter your mindset for the rest of the day, making you more optimistic and complacent
  - > Gratitude not only helps to reduce levels of cortisol, the stress hormone in the body, but it also aids in the reduction of anxiety and helps us manage stress better.

### 3. Establish a routine

- Humans are creatures of habit, so in a situation where we have little control on the outside world, we can find solace in a daily routine. By creating a 'to-do list' everyday, you will feel that your time is being used productively and that your sense of purpose is reinforced.

### 4. Exercise

- It's no secret that when we exercise, our body releases endorphins which elevates our mood. So, go for a run (while keeping your distance from others, of course), join an online class, or take up that challenge your friends have been sharing on social media to get those feel good hormones flowing through your body. Not only will this help you de-stress, but it will leave you feeling stronger and healthier.

### 5. Sleep well

- 7 to 8 hours of sleep is vital during this time as it will give your body a chance to rest and refuel. Without enough sleep we can be left feeling stressed and anxious
    - > To help you achieve this, try to wake up and sleep at the same time every day and avoid taking naps
  - We know that with everything happening in the world today, it may be hard to get a good night's sleep as we think about our finances, health, and family, so a "night time routine" to unwind may be useful to induce sleep.
    - > Get your body into a relaxed state by taking a warm shower or bath
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- > Avoid looking at your phone before going to bed as blue light emitted from this device can stimulate your brain and make it harder to fall asleep.
- > Dim the lights and get comfortable with some peaceful music or a good book.

### 6. Connect virtually with friends and family

- As social beings, relationships and connections with other individuals drives us as a species. Make it a point to call your friends and family regularly, with your camera on, to simulate regular social interaction.
  - > We are blessed to live in an age with incredible technological advances, so play games with friends online, try out a new recipe with your parents, or read your niece or nephew a bedtime story.

### 7. Do things you enjoy

- It's easy to get consumed by work throughout the day, but it's important to give yourself a break and do things that you enjoy. So, pick up that book that you haven't had time to read, bake up a storm in the kitchen, or start painting again! When we do activities that we enjoy, it releases dopamine and serotonin in the brain which makes us happy and boosts the immune system.

### 8. Connect with the outside world

- As we all play our part by staying at home, it's important that we also take the time to leave the house to simply take a walk or get

some fresh air. As the weather becomes warmer and the spring flowers begin to bloom, connect with nature by simply enjoying its splendor. A study in 2016 stated that it appeared that when people were exposed to more blue skies, even as little as 20% to 30%, their mood was elevated.

### 9. Connect with the outside world

- This is a difficult time for all of us, so it's ok to feel uncertain and anxious. The worst thing that you could do is be hard on yourself for feeling so many unwelcome emotions. Give yourself some much needed love and be kind to yourself.

### 10. Remind yourself this is temporary

- Though we may feel like this will go on forever as we are uncertain of when the end may be, remind yourself that this is a temporary situation which will one day come to an end. By removing a sense of finality or permanence from the present circumstances, you will find more relief and comfort.

2020 has been a strange year for all of us and taking care of ourselves and our mental health is of the utmost importance. If you are struggling with severe mental health issues, seek help from a mental health professional or call your region's mental health helpline.

The eCompliance team is committed to providing you with resources and techniques to help you persevere and stay strong. Together, we will get through this.

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## REFERENCES

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