

Somar + Med

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

IRELAND-PORTUGAL BUSINESS NETWORK

Supporting the Mental Health of Your Team During Covid 19

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If you have any questions relating to this talk or would like to share any additional insights, please contact him directly:

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WHAT WILL BE COVERED

- ▶ Identifying mental health concerns amongst your team
- ▶ Struggling with stress
- ▶ Protecting your mental health
- ▶ Guidance on how to support your team

COVID-19 –IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH

COVID-19 Continues to present new and unique challenges

We require to adapt to a changing work environment

Many are teleworking full-time for the first time

Isolated from co-workers ,friends and family

Daily living routines are disrupted

This is causing Anxiety, Stress and Strain-physically ,mentally and financially

Completely natural for this uncertainty to lead to anxiety & stress

COVID-19 –PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Main Psychological impacts observed to date :

- Elevated rates of stress-36% of the American Population-APA Study March 25th
- 59% feel COVID-19 is having a serious impact on their day to day lives
- Anxiety

Impact of quarantine

- Loneliness
- Depression
- Increased alcohol use

Prior to COVID-19 Prevalence of mental health problems 1 in 4

COVID-19 –ALCOHOL USE

Alcohol Change UK Research April 2020

2,000 people in survey/weighted to ensure representative of UK Population

21% drinking more frequently

15% drinking more per session

18% of previous daily drinkers have further increased the amount they drink

7% of survey respondents felt that alcohol had increased the tension in their household

IMPACT OF SELF MEDICATING WITH ALCOHOL

Overuse of alcohol can worsen symptoms of many mental health problems

It can lead to low mood and anxiety

Once the immediate feeling of calm fades you feel worse than before

Post drinking headaches impact concentration and are often accompanied by feelings of depression and/or anxiety

Advice not to drink more than 14 units a week on a regular basis (6 pints of 4% beer or 6 glasses of 13% wine or 14 glasses of 40% whiskey)

Avoid heavy drinking episodes-have several drink free days-4 days per week

IDENTIFYING MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS AMONGST YOUR TEAM

Warning signs

- Decreased Resilience
- Employees making mistakes/trouble concentrating
- Employee language becoming more Negative and Emotional

Symptoms

- Fatigue
- Difficulty Sleeping/Can't unwind
- Feeling anxious/irritable

STRUGGLING WITH STRESS

Stress affects us all/normal part of life

Some stress beneficial but must be minimal and controlled

Once stress impacts your activities of daily living it is harmful

It is crucial you recognise the symptoms of stress

These are divided into :

- ▶ Physical Symptoms
- ▶ Cognitive Symptoms
- ▶ Emotional Symptoms
- ▶ Behavioural Symptoms

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

Low Energy

Upset Stomach

Chest pain/rapid heartbeat

Frequent colds

Dry mouth

Clenched Jaw

Headaches

Aches/pains and tense muscle

Insomnia

Tremors/cold or sweaty hands

Difficulty swallowing

Grinding teeth in sleep

COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS

Constant Worrying

Racing thoughts

Forgetfulness and disorganisation

Inability to focus

Poor Judgement

Being pessimistic or seeing only the negative side

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

Becoming easily agitated, frustrated and moody

Feeling overwhelmed, like you are losing control or need to take control

Having difficulty relaxing and quieting your mind

Feeling bad about yourself(low self-esteem),lonely, worthless and depressed

Avoiding others

BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS

Changes in appetite-under or over-eating
Procrastinating and avoiding responsibilities
Increased use of alcohol and cigarettes
Exhibiting more nervous behaviours such as
fidgeting,pacing,nail biting

CONSEQUENCES OF LONG TERM STRESS

Mental Health Problems-Depression/Anxiety

Cardiovascular disease including

- Heart Attack/Myocardial Infarction
- High Blood Pressure
- Abnormal Heart Rhythms
- Obesity & eating disorders
- Menstrual irregularities
- Skin-acne/psoriasis/eczema and hair loss
- GI Problems-gastritis-ulcer/ulcerative colitis/irritable bowel

PROTECTING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

- ▶ Recognise symptoms of stress
- ▶ Stay Informed but set limits for news and social media
- ▶ Get Dressed
- ▶ Maintain a regular Schedule
- ▶ Separate Work & Home
- ▶ Stay Social/Remain connected to others
- ▶ Keep up Healthy Routines such as daily exercise
- ▶ Eat Healthy

GUIDANCE ON HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR TEAM

Regular contact- looking out for mental health concerns

Ensure colleagues keep a regular schedule including breaks, set boundaries on work schedule

Advise separate work and living area/discuss ergonomics with your H&S Manager

Team to stay connected socially through e.g whats app group

Advise regular exercise-twice per day-morning & evening ideally getting fresh air

Advise to limit media consumption to once daily accredited source

Show empathy and be available-recognise the impact of isolation

Stay connected with video conferences rather than phone calls

Advice of the availability of EAP /Mental Health Supports

If concerns bring to attention of HR for possible Occupational Health Support

IRELAND PORTUGAL BUSINESS NETWORK WEBINAR
PROTECTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF YOUR TEAM
USEFUL LINKS

- ▶ <https://covid19estamoson.gov.pt/medidas-excepcionais/#estrangeiros-em-portugal>
- ▶ <https://covid19estamoson.gov.pt/>
- ▶ www.hsa.ie
- ▶ [Identifying mental health concerns amongst your team](#)
- ▶ [Struggling with stress](#)
- ▶ [Protecting your mental health](#)
- ▶ <http://www.somarmed.com/covid-19.html>



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Questions

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