

Helping Employees Avoid Loneliness and Isolation



TIP SHEET



As organizations adapt to create policies and deliver technology supporting the movement to a remote workforce, they should also prepare to support employees' needs for social interaction and community. One of the challenges of self-isolating and remote working is managing loneliness, which is already a growing problem among workers. Before the coronavirus pandemic, three in five Americans classified as lonely, according to the results of a [research study](#) conducted by Cigna. Loneliness has a profound effect on people's physical and mental health, as much as smoking [15 cigarettes in a day](#).

Support Physical Activity

Loneliness can raise levels of stress hormones and inflammation, which in turn can increase the risk of high blood pressure, obesity and other chronic conditions. Many gyms, yoga studios and group workout classes are going virtual to help keep a sense of normalcy and connection, an excellent resource for employees to continue routines. Encourage employees to take classes to break up the day or [start a new healthy habit](#) focused on exercise buddies with a few squats at the beginning of a call.

Fight Monotony

One of the benefits of a workspace is that it is built for, well, work. With proper social distancing, encourage work from home employees to go out for a walk for a change of scenery and to phone a friend to re-create workplace feeling.

Maintain Active Relationships

Encourage employees to meet for virtual coffee breaks or schedule stand down calls to signal the end of the day while also providing a social break that mimics what employees are used to experiencing in the workplace. Provide tips and tools to make it easy with ideas such as daily conversation starter topics to ease the transition. For a quick start, consider leveraging our [2020 Wellbeing Calendar](#) for ideas.

Mindfulness

Mindful practice can do more than lower stress, it can also provide a time for employees to filter out distracting stimuli to help drive focus, prevent anxiety and depression, and boost feelings of self-worth. The simple acronym [THRIVE](#) is an easy way to give employees a tactical first step into a positive, mindful practice.

Leverage established workforce groups

Your wellness champions, safety, diversity and young professional groups represent the unique fabric of your workforce. Encourage group leaders to identify one or two ways to keep groups active during the disruption.



Ideas to Share:

- TedTalks, [videos](#) or virtual learning sessions
- Build a dedicated Microsoft Teams or Slack channel and post regularly
- At-home team scavenger hunt
- Virtual roundtable with senior leaders focused on a relevant topic for the group
- Or, encourage them to host something fun like a planking challenge (on the floor) to show how people are getting stronger while adapting to change

Ready to take your employee wellbeing program to the next level? [Talk to an expert at Virgin Pulse to get started.](#)

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