

City of Milwaukee Employee Assistance Program

Work During The Pandemic

Regardless of the work you do, Covid-19 has had an impact. It has directly or indirectly impacted work roles, responsibilities, how work gets done, who you work with (teammates) and resources available to you.

Covid-19 has caused a divide in the workforce between remote and onsite workers. Every City department has experienced this divided workforce to a degree. As a consequence onsite workers may feel resentment, unsupported, the perception of preferential treatment and distrust. Remote workers are likely to feel isolated, struggle with focus and unexpected challenges in productivity.

The grass is not greener on the other side; both onsite and remote workers face their own sets of challenges during this pandemic. Remote workers may struggle with work equipment, work space and establishing appropriate work from home boundaries.

The line between work hours and home life all too often blur. Time management and productivity are difficult when family demands like home schooling are competing for attention. These issues, together with isolation, increases stress and in some instances lead to substance misuse and mental health problems.

Onsite workers are at greater risk for compassion fatigue and burnout. They are doing more with less and are having to step up to staffing gaps. Onsite workers may feel over extended and exhausted. Morale will suffer if employees feel unappreciated, unsupported and uncared for. As with remote workers, onsite employees are also at

high risk for overwhelming stress, substance misuse and mental health issues.

What to do?

Be mindful of **emotional signs and symptoms** in yourself and direct reports. Examples of emotional signs and symptoms include appearing exhausted and feeling overextended.

Watch for **signs and symptoms of depersonalization**. Ask: Do I feel detached from work? Am I avoiding others? Does my direct report appear uncharacteristically unmotivated?

Be alert to signs and symptoms of **low accomplishment**. A visible example is a sharp decrease in productivity. However it may also be a chronic feeling of not getting enough done. Unrealistic guilt of not getting work tasks accomplished as planned or desired.

Whether working onsite or remotely, take breaks to emotionally detach from work. Schedule and take time off from work. Prioritize self-care and stay connected with supportive family and friends.

Early intervention is key toward addressing stress, substance misuse and mental health. Utilize and refer others to supportive resources like the Employee Assistance Program, UnitedHealthCare or Workforce Health.

Employee Assistance Program



City of Milwaukee EAP

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Preparing For The Holidays During Covid-19

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), 64% of people with mental illness report that the winter holidays "make their condition worse." That's without the added factor of social distancing and alienation from loved ones during this pandemic.

Scale it down: Have mini celebrations that mimic the typical larger ones. If that feels too weird or there aren't enough people, then maybe it's best to abandon the tradition for just this year and do something different altogether.

Harness virtual platforms: Taking video and posting the video on a family Facebook group so that everyone can watch, or scheduling a celebration on Zoom is something that extends beyond your family unit but is still safe.

Covid-19 fatigue: We have been adjusting and sacrificing for months but

resist the feeling to stop complying with safety protocols. Keep up the handwashing, mask wearing and physical distancing for your protection and the protection of others. Don't let your guard down; protect yourself especially when others are not.

Boost your immune system: As flu season overlaps with this pandemic, it's especially important to get good sleep, eat well balanced meals and avoid over indulging on unhealthy foods, alcohol and drugs.

Be aware of your mood: Be mindful of your thought patterns and how you are feeling throughout the day. Look at challenges from different perspectives. Challenge chronically negative thought patterns. If unable to do this on your own, talk to someone who supports you, your doctor, pastor, or mental health professional.

Coping

Everyone must face difficult situations, and everyone must come up with effective ways to deal with and bounce back from these situations. *Coping* is how we deal with these adverse situations. Below are types of coping behaviors grouped together by their likeness.

Self-Soothing: Involves comforting yourself by using your five senses.

- Something to touch (e.g. a stuffed animal or stress ball).
- Something to hear (e.g. peaceful music or sounds).
- Something to see (e.g. snow globe, fish tank, candle flame).
- Something to taste (e.g. tea, mints).
- Something to smell (e.g. perfume, lotion).

Distraction: Focusing on something else for a limited time.

- Puzzles, books, art/crafts, knitting, movies, playing music.

Emotional Awareness: Tools to identify and express your feelings.

- Journal, drawing/painting, poetry, or list/chart of emotions.

Opposite Actions: Involves the opposite of your impulse or current feeling (e.g. engaging in something funny or cheery).

- Funny movie, show or book.

EAP Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees who develop behavioral/emotional problems that may directly affect their work performance, and to provide Key Personnel with policy and procedural guidelines for the management of these problems.

City of Milwaukee Wellness Resources

- **Not feeling well?** Visit the [Workplace Clinic](#) (Zeidler Municipal Building) 841 N. Broadway, Milwaukee, WI 53202 for **FREE** onsite health care services. Call [414-777-3413](tel:414-777-3413) or go to www.milwaukee.gov/der/wycm for further information.
- For additional current Wellness resources visit: www.milwaukee.gov/der and click on the *Wellness* tab.
- **UnitedHealthCare App** is a UnitedHealthcare (UHC) mobile app that provides instant access to your family's critical health information, anytime/anywhere. Find a physician, check the status of a claim or speak directly with a healthcare professional. Search for UnitedHealthCare in your app store.