

Employees and COVID-19

The daily stress caused by the virus, social distancing and a deep financial crisis have had a big impact on all people in our community. It is normal to experience feelings of isolation, anxiety and uncertainty in this abnormal situation. Prioritizing your mental health and staying connected is more important than ever.

To best assist your employees that may be impacted:

1. Remind employees that it's ok to not be ok

Everyone reacts differently to stressful situations. Remind your employees that it is natural to feel **stress, anxiety, grief and worry** during the COVID-19 outbreak. Encourage them to practice healthy coping activities such as deep breathing, meditation, exercise, establishing a routine and taking a break from the news or social media. If their distress becomes too much, encourage them to seek professional help.

2. Encourage open communication

Employees with pre-existing mental health conditions such as anxiety or depression may be experiencing an increase in their symptoms at this time. It is critical that human resource professionals and managers exercise additional patience in understanding the needs and potential accommodations of your workforce. Staying connected with employees is more challenging as we work from home, but there are ways Supervisors can check-in with employees through scheduled phone calls or virtual meetings.

3. Remind employees of EAP resources

To address the emotional wellbeing of your workforce, it is important that your employees understand and have information about your EAP resources and how to access them. If possible, it may be beneficial to expand the number of EAP visits during this crisis. If your workplace does not offer an EAP, consider connecting your employees to local resources available for treatment and support.

4. Local mental health resources

You will find a listing of available resources for businesses on the Gazette website. There are several local mental health agencies currently providing services by phone or telehealth. Most local mental health agencies have immediate openings.

In addition, crisis hot lines or warm lines are available:

- Foundation 2 Crisis Line at 319-362-2174
- Abbe Health Warm Line at 844-775-WARM (9276)
- Your Life Iowa at 855-581-8111 (talk) or 8550-895-8398 (text) <https://yourlifeiowa.org/> for information or chat

Visit MakeltOK.org/lowa to learn more about mental health resources for businesses.

Additional information can be found at National Alliance on Mental Illness NAMI's [COVID-19 Information & Resources](#).

This resource was created by a multi-agency mental health workgroup within Linn County