



# Returning to the Workplace-- Resiliency Toolkit for Managers

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Parlons-en. **paesf**

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## About the Toolkit

The Returning to the Workplace--Resiliency Toolkit for Managers provides information, strategies, tips, and resources to guide managers and people leaders in their work to support employee and team well-being and resiliency. In the toolkit, you will find information and resources on:

- Mental Health Impact of COVID-19
- 5 Factors of Resiliency
- Stress, Stress Management, and Self-care
- Managing Change in the Workplace
- Employee Burnout
- Talking with an Employee or Colleague about their Mental Health
- Responding to Employee Grief and Loss & Trauma
- EFAP Supports and Services

For additional resources, visit [myfseap.ca](https://myfseap.ca).

## About FSEAP

FSEAP supports Canadians' well-being and resilience by designing and delivering Employee and Family Assistance Programs (EFAP), workplace support services, wellness programs, and leadership support services. As the largest and the only not-for-profit, community-based EFAP provider in Canada, our mission is healthy workplaces and strong communities.

# Mental and Behavioural Impact of COVID-19

The pandemic has been shaping our lives for more than a year, with unprecedented upheaval to our personal and professional lives. Social isolation, health anxiety, grief and loss, economic downturn, and workplace stress have contributed to new levels of mental health concerns for Canadians. Mental Health Research Canada's (MHRC) latest snapshot of Canadian mental health<sup>1</sup> shows that both self-reported and diagnosed anxiety and depression continue to rise. Now, 1 in 4 Canadians reports experiencing a mental health problem either personally or within their family. This is up from 1 in 5 Canadians before the pandemic. In MHRC's latest poll, two-thirds of Canadians report moderate to high levels of anxiety and/or depression, the other third report experiencing mental stress symptoms (such as feeling anxious, restless, lonely, sad, depressed or hopeless, or finding little or no interest/pleasure in things they normally enjoy). One-third of Canadians who previously reported they were handling stress well now report they are not able to do so any longer.

Long work hours, shift work, trauma exposure, limited control, workplace conflicts, and low social support contribute to workplace stress for the Canadian workforce. In addition, there are significant impacts on the health and well-being of employees due to the pandemic. The most common are burnout, compassion fatigue, moral injury, and comparative suffering.

- **Burnout:** Emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion resulting from work stress or frustration that does not end and can lead to disengagement, loss of motivation, and detachment. Burnout occurs when there is a lack of balance between the job's demands and the employee's coping resources.
- **Compassion fatigue:** Chronic physical and emotional exhaustion experienced by those who care for sick or traumatized people that can lead to feelings of overwhelm, helplessness, hopelessness and reduced empathy. Also described as secondary traumatic stress, symptoms mirror those of Post-Traumatic Stress.
- **Moral injury:** Strong cognitive and emotional responses that result from when a person's actions conflict with one's core values or moral code. It is a normal human response to an abnormal traumatic event.
- **Comparative suffering:** Feeling the need to see one's suffering in light of other's pain.

## The most significant stressors from the pandemic?<sup>1</sup>

- Social isolation
- Fear about family member contracting COVID-19
- Economic downturn, job loss, or fear of job loss (self or family member), or losing work hours
- Challenges of working from home
- Not being able to pay household bills in full
- Fear about personally contracting COVID-19

## The most common work-related factors that can add stress during a pandemic?<sup>2</sup>

- Worry about being exposed to the virus at work
- Balancing personal and family needs while working
- Managing workload
- Uncertainty about future of employment or workplace
- Adapting to changing workspace and/or schedule
- Lack of access to tools or equipment needed to perform effectively

<sup>1</sup> Mental Health in Crisis: How COVID-19 is impacting Canadians—Findings of Poll #5.

<https://www.mhrc.ca/national-poll-covid/findings-of-poll-5>

<sup>2</sup> Center for Disease Control. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/mental-health-non-healthcare.html>

**The best way to address these negative impacts is by developing resilience.** Resilience is a critical element in well-being. It helps protect us from various mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression, and helps protect our physical health by improving our immune system. For a workforce to be strong, they need resilience. Resilience is crucial for helping employees at all levels of the organization manage change, tackle stress, increase harmony by reducing workplace conflicts, and overcome job challenges.

## Resilience: Managing in the “New Normal”

Change is a part of life – there is no escaping it. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the frequency and spread of change in our modern-day life. The constancy of change, together with the upheaval and uncertainty it generates, has become a way of life or what may be described as the “new normal.”

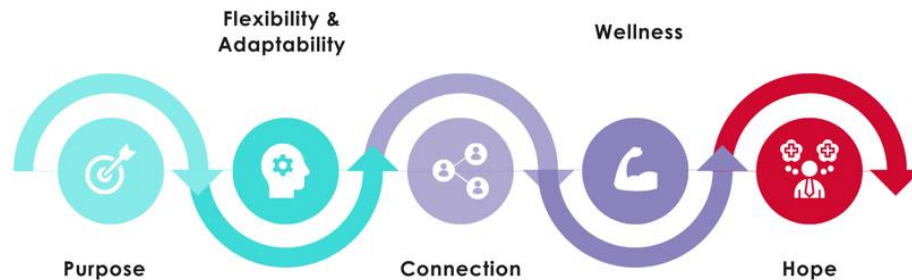
What is the impact of this “new normal?” Fear of getting sick with COVID-19, changes to our work role or routine, childcare challenges, and loss of colleagues through staffing reductions challenge our ability to adapt and manage effectively. Ongoing change can drain our coping reserves and cause us to feel overwhelmed and depleted. For many, this “new normal” impact is exhaustion, feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and depression. At these times, we may experience a “sink or swim” feeling. Critical to keeping our heads above water is *resilience*.

### What Is Resilience?

Resilience is the quality or capacity within oneself to cope, recover, or grow after a “life quake” of any dimension. It is the factor that sustains us, enabling us to flourish and experience a sense of well-being amidst ever-increasing expectations, workplace stress, and life challenges. Resilience does not imply that one is less impacted by change. It does mean, however, that one can respond differently. While resilience is something that each of us holds inside, we can develop and heighten this capacity to thrive during times of uncertainty and challenge. Psychologist Beth Miller says, “Resilience is like a muscle – the harder we work it, the stronger it gets.” When fully developed, resilience can enable us to turn adversity into an advantage.

## Five Factors of Resiliency

Research indicates that those who bounce back in the face of multiple life demands display specific attributes that others do not. These attributes, or resilience factors, are the conditions that help a person to survive and recover during times of extreme stress and trauma. Research shows that five factors of resiliency promote resilience at both the individual and organizational levels. These include **purpose, flexibility and adaptability, connection to others, wellness and hope.**



**Purpose:** Purpose in life is a long-term, forward-looking intention to accomplish aims meaningful to the self and the world beyond the self. People who have a clear sense of purpose and direction in life find it easier to bounce back in the face of challenge. Having purpose (and a shared sense of purpose within an organization) provides perspective, confidence, and determination. Feeling a sense of purpose and meaning in one's life contributes to more healthful and adaptive regulation of negative emotional responses—meaning one is better prepared to respond to emotional challenges more quickly and efficiently. A sense of purpose is linked to higher levels of employee engagement, fulfillment, organizational commitment, and an increased sense of well-being.

**Flexibility and adaptability:** Flexibility and adaptability represent the mindset, skills, and abilities we need to learn and move forward in the face of challenges. This factor involves possessing problem-solving skills, balanced and healthy thinking, and regulating or managing our emotions. For example, we can identify when stress is turning harmful or toxic and can take action to manage it effectively. When we possess this factor, we have advantages that nurture greater work and life success, including a greater sense of mastery and growth.

**Connection:** Humans are inherently social beings. We are better positioned to bounce back when we have a social support network with whom we can both give and receive support during times of stress. Research studies show that social support is essential for maintaining our physical and mental well-being. It can enhance our resilience and help lower feelings of distress and reduce the impact of traumatic stress.

**Wellness:** Attending to our physical well-being is a critical factor in resiliency. Sleep, nutrition and exercise are vital in maintaining physical well-being and recovery from injuries or illness. They are also instrumental in protecting against mental health problems and in mitigating potential consequences of stressful events.

**Hope:** Hope is desire or wishes accompanied by an expectation or belief that what we desire will come to be.<sup>2</sup> It is a positive cognitive state that enables us to see and create a path towards a goal.<sup>3</sup> In essence, it gives us the drive to develop strategies to reach our goals and motivates us to act on those strategies. During challenging times, hope fosters an orientation to life that allows for a positive, optimistic outlook.

## Building Resilience

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<sup>2</sup> Merriam Webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hope>

<sup>3</sup> PositivePsychology.com. <https://positivepsychology.com/hope-therapy/>

Building or developing resilience involves enhancing each of the five factors or characteristics within yourself. For each of the factors, there are specific competencies that research shows, if developed, strengthen one's resiliency. The graphic below explains:



#### Resilient individuals:

- Have a strong sense of purpose and direction in life—They know what is most important to them. Knowing their core values provide clarity and enhance their ability to make tough decisions during stressful times. They experience a sense of calm from living and working in congruence with their values.
- Are flexible and adaptable in the face of adversity—They are effective problem-solvers and manage their emotions to stay calm during times of distress. They also practice balanced healthy thinking—meaning they look at the entire situation—considering the positive, negative, and neutral aspects before concluding. They view change and challenges as opportunities rather than threats.
- Have a strong social support network and a sense of connection to others—They reach out and receive social support when needed and give support to others in need.
- Attend to their wellness—They attend to their physical well-being by practicing healthy eating, good sleep hygiene practices, and regular exercise.
- Have a positive outlook and hope for the future—They spend time thinking about the potential for positive outcomes, not just the negative.
- Have strategies and a plan to support self-care when feeling high stress—They engage in self-care to reduce stress as soon as possible.

#### As a leader, supporting workplace resilience is:

- Understanding the factors that add stress for yourself and your employees
- Creating a culture of compassion and positivity--where people know that mistakes are learning opportunities that can lead to positive results
- Developing an awareness of behavioural and emotional reactions to stress and burnout
- Modelling problem-solving from a variety of viewpoints—encouraging employees to do the same
- Creating and sustaining an environment where employees know they are valued and feel appreciated
- Understand the importance of positive, supportive communication to preserve, support and enhance employee relationships and development.







# Recognizing the Symptoms of Stress

While a certain amount of stress can be motivating and kick us into high gear, too much stress can impact our ability to cope both emotionally and physically. When stress levels stay too high for too long, the risk of burnout goes up. Burnout can lead to feeling numb, emotionally exhausted, and unable to focus or cope with the demands of life and work.

Because stress is a part of everyday life, especially in high-stress, high-risk jobs—it can be easy to not recognize when it’s creeping up and becoming destructive and overwhelming our ability to stay grounded, focused, and healthy.

As a manager, it is essential to recognize when things are becoming unmanageable and prioritize actions you can take to manage and reduce the negative impact of job-related stress for employees and yourself.

## Common signs and symptoms of stress include:

Cognitive	Emotional	Physical	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Uncertainty</li><li>• Lack of focus</li><li>• Indecisiveness</li><li>• Poor memory</li><li>• Poor concentration</li><li>• Confusion</li><li>• Poor problem solving</li><li>• Blaming others</li><li>• Racing thoughts</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Excessive worry</li><li>• Signs of anxiety</li><li>• Agitation</li><li>• Irritability</li><li>• Anger</li><li>• Defensiveness</li><li>• Low mood/Depression</li><li>• Grief</li><li>• Denial</li><li>• Apprehension</li><li>• Overwhelm</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Frequent headaches</li><li>• Muscle aches</li><li>• Frequent illness</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Rapid heart rate</li><li>• Chest Pains</li><li>• Chills</li><li>• Muscle fatigue</li><li>• Weakness</li><li>• Nausea/loss of appetite</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Withdrawal</li><li>• Sleeping too much or too little</li><li>• Procrastinating</li><li>• Poor hygiene</li><li>• Change in social patterns or communication style</li><li>• Poor performance</li><li>• Increased conflicts</li><li>• Alcohol or drug use</li></ul>

## How to reduce job stress for employees?

**Keep workloads manageable.** Check in with employees regarding their workloads to ensure they don’t become unmanageable. Communicate timelines for completion and why meeting the timeline is essential and encourage them to communicate if they foresee potential challenges. When challenges are voiced, encourage team brainstorming to identify obstacles. Focus on eliminating obstacles, providing resources employees might need, and clarify which tasks are the highest priority and which can wait until the following week.

**Encourage workplace wellness.** Encourage employees to get out for walks during their lunch break. Consider holding fitness challenges, such as a steps contest for the team to encourage activity. Share information on healthy options for snacks and lunches to encourage healthy eating.

**Encourage healthy work-life balance.** Remind employees to take breaks, not check email, or do work tasks while off work. Remember that employees follow their manager’s lead, role-model healthy boundaries between work and time off. Build breaks into your schedule and refrain from sending employees emails outside of work hours.

**Keep communication open during times of change or uncertainty.** Regular, open two-way communication between employees and managers during uncertain times helps to mitigate anxiety and stress. Keep employees updated and informed as to why and how changes will be implemented. Create opportunities to connect frequently to hear concerns and consider actions you can take to help address those concerns.

**Promote and encourage the use of the EFAP.** Regularly remind employees about the resources, support and professional services available to them through the EFAP. Professional counsellors, health, and life coaches experienced in stress management are available to provide confidential assistance.

### Strategies for Managing Your Stress

**Pay attention.** Know your personal signs of stress and be aware of when things become distressing or unmanageable. Include colleagues or others in your stress management plan, so others can help you recognize when you may be struggling to cope.

**Set boundaries.** When you say yes to something, you are often saying no to something else. Know your limits. Pay attention to your feelings and stress level. Preserve space to mentally disconnect as much as possible during downtime from work. Set appropriate boundaries and communicate with others to allow yourself some space to de-stress.

**Create balance.** Participate in positive activities that provide a sense of pleasure, a sense of achievement, and a sense of closeness—they are vital to feeling a sense of happiness and reducing your stress level.

**Embrace stress-relieving activities.** Select and practice constructive ways to release stress, including physical activity, reading, listening to music, practicing mindfulness, and connecting with others, as examples. In addition, take some time to reflect on ways that you have successfully managed stress in the past.

**Get your sleep.** Practice healthy sleep behaviours, including building a sleep routine, avoiding caffeine before bed, and practicing relaxation techniques such as deep breathing. Regular sleep increases calm, mood and plays a crucial role in memory and learning.

**Get support.** Connecting and talking with supportive people in your life is key to stress management. If connecting with family, friends or colleagues isn't enough, seeking assistance from an EFAP professional counsellor or coach can help.

# Make Mental Health a Priority

The workplace is where we spend most of our time. It is a place where we make friends and make a living. Having a good job can lead to good mental health and well-being. But, other times, work can be the cause of stress and poor mental health, which can lead to absenteeism, presenteeism or workplace conflicts. However, managers can do a number of things to encourage employees to speak up about their mental health.

Creating an open and supportive workplace culture is the key; a place where people feel like they can come forward about their mental health. Whether it is checking in with your team or encouraging them to come to you, there is a lot that you can do as a manager to support your employees in feeling more comfortable coming to you.

## Here are some tips:

**Normalize mental health.** Employees often don't feel safe opening up about their mental health, especially to their employer. Talking openly about mental health in your office and meetings with staff normalizes it as a regular topic of conversation. Make sure that they are aware that you want to support them. Ask open-ended, non-judgmental questions to learn more about their needs.

**Have resources ready.** Have a mixture of resources on hand to provide employees who share they are struggling with stress or mental health concerns. Resources can include information about benefits and support available to employees, such as personal counselling or work/life consultation services through the Employee Assistance Program, workplace policies such as sick or compassionate leave, or accommodation policies.

**Maintain confidentiality.** Stigma and concerns about being stigmatized by sharing mental health struggles can get in the way of individuals seeking support. As a manager, make sure employees know that what they share about their mental health with you will be kept confidential. This kind of information is sensitive and should be shared with as few people as possible and only with the employee's permission.

**Support work-life balance.** Today, technology and remote work have made it more and more challenging to unplug and get needed downtime from work. Employees and employers alike are seeing the line blurred between work and personal life. When putting in the extra hours, or taking on extra shifts due to being short-staffed, becomes a habit, an employee's personal life and well-being can begin to suffer. Employees should be encouraged to take their meal breaks and take the vacation time they are allocated. This doesn't mean an employee is never allowed to work late; however, if you notice they are regularly working work beyond their required hours, it might be time to check in to see how they are managing and whether they need help. Remember, employees follow their manager's lead. If you're sending emails on weekends or during your holidays, they assume you want them to do the same.



## Keeping an Eye on Stress and Mental Health

Stress is the mental and physical tension that can result from adapting to any number of changes. Stress can result from various situations, such as traffic, noise, deadlines, financial difficulties, illness, or interactions, such as family or workplace conflicts. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, health concerns, job and financial uncertainty, excessive stress is all too common. When you are chronically in a stressful environment, it can be easy to miss the toll prolonged stress is taking on your mental health. Because too much stress can be harmful to us, it is essential to manage it effectively. But, to manage it, we need to recognize when it is impacting us negatively.

### Tools to Help You and Your Employees Assess Stress and Mental Health

Learning how stress affects us and recognizing early warning signs of distress are essential tools for preventing physical and mental health problems. Here are a couple of tools to help you and your employees evaluate stress levels and reflect on mental health:

1. **“What’s Your Stress Index?”** created by the Canadian Mental Health Association. By answering yes or no to the 25 questions listed, you can calculate your stress index score. Complete the test [online here](#).

2. “**Mental Health Continuum Self-Check,**” adapted from the Mental Health Commission of Canada’s Mental Health Continuum.<sup>4</sup> The Mental Health Continuum Self-Check chart below displays general emotional, physical and behavioural signs and indicators of mental health on a continuum from healthy to ill. It also identifies actions to take depending on where you are land on the continuum.

### Make Stress and Mental Health Check-in’s a Regular Part of Your Routine

#### MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM SELF-CHECK

	← HEALTHY	REACTING	INJURED	ILL →
	SELF-CARE & SOCIAL SUPPORT		PROFESSIONAL CARE	
	Normal Functioning	Common & Reversible Distress	Significant Functional Impairment	Clinical Disorder, Severe & Persistent Functional Impairment
MOOD	Normal fluctuations in moods Calm Confident	Nervousness Irritability Impatience Sadness	Anxious Angry Sadness, tearfulness	Excessive anxiety/panic Easily enraged or aggression Feeling overwhelmed Depression or suicidal thoughts/intent
THINKING & ATTITUDE	Good sense of humour Present/ability to focus on tasks Takes things in stride	Displaced sarcasm Intrusive thoughts Some distraction or loss of ability to focus	Negative attitude Recurrent intrusive thoughts Preoccupied or distracted Cannot focus on tasks	Excessive insubordination Noncompliant Inability to concentrate Loss of memory or cognitive abilities
SLEEP	Normal sleep patterns	Trouble sleeping	Restlessness or disturbed sleep	Unable to fall or stay asleep (sleeping too much or too little)
PHYSICAL HEALTH	Physically feeling well Good energy level Good appetite Maintaining stable weight	Tired or low energy Muscle tension Changes in eating patterns Headaches Some weight gain or loss	Tiredness or fatigue Aches and pains Loss of appetite Fluctuations or changes in weight	Exhaustion, prolonged fatigue Physical illness No appetite Extreme weight gain or loss
BEHAVIOUR	Physically and social active Usual self-confidence Comfortable with others	Decreased activity or socializing Present but distracted Procrastination	Social avoidance, withdrawal Tardiness Decreased work performance	Absent from work Unable to perform duties Isolation, avoiding social connections
HABITS	Limited or no alcohol use or gambling Limited or no addictive behaviours	Regular but controlled alcohol use or gambling	Increased alcohol use or hard-to-control gambling	Regular to frequent binge drinking Addiction Significant negative consequences due to substance use
ACTIONS TO TAKE AT EACH PHASE OF THE CONTINUUM				
	Focus on task at hand Break problems into manageable chunks Identify and nurture support systems Maintain healthy lifestyle	Recognize limits, take breaks Get adequate rest, food, and exercise Engage in healthy coping strategies Identify and minimize stressors	Identify and understand own signs of distress Make self-care a priority Talk with someone Seek social support instead of withdrawing Ask for help	Seek professional care Follow recommendations of health care professional Regain physical and mental health

Adapted from the Mental Health Commission of Canada

<sup>4</sup> Mental Health Commission of Canada. <https://theworkingmind.ca/continuum-self-check>

Have a look at your Stress Index and the Mental Health Continuum to clarify where you are today and look at some actions you can take to help you stay healthy. But don't make it a one-time exercise. Stress levels and our mental health fluctuate depending on what's going on around us. These tools become more effective the more you use them. Regularly reflecting on how you're doing and building it into conversations with those in your support network can go a long way to increasing your awareness and attention to the actions you can take to maintain your mental and physical well-being.

**Check-ins with Employees.** Make time in one-to-one meetings, huddles, or team meetings to ask how individual employees or team members are coping with challenging work projects, stressful work experiences, or workplace changes. Here are some tips for using the Mental Health Continuum Self-Check to help facilitate conversations about mental health and coping.

#### First time discussing the tool:

1. Share why being mindful of health is important to you as a leader and as a person.
2. Introduce the tool with a brief description of what it is and how to use it.
3. Share how the tool has been helpful to you and how it might be helpful to them.
4. Invite employees to share what good mental health means to them.
5. Discuss the benefits of having a healthy team and supporting team members who may find themselves struggling.

#### Recurring huddle/meeting discussions about health:

1. Do a brief mental health check-in with your team. Start by sharing how you are doing first. For example, you might share, "I'm feeling drained today." Then share what you're planning to do to take care of yourself, such as "I going to take a long walk when I get home and make sure I get to bed on time."
2. Invite the team to share what they do to cope, relax or re-energize when they feel stressed.
3. Talk about current or upcoming work stressors for the team and brainstorm actions they can take to prepare and cope. Keep in mind; this is a mental health conversation, not an operational discussion. The goal is to encourage each team member to consider their mental health during stressful work times.
4. Lastly, remind and encourage team members to prioritize taking care of themselves and reaching out if they need support.



# Building Your Self-Care Plan

We all have different strengths, needs, limitations, and areas where we need support. When it comes to building a self-care plan, what works well for one person may not work for the next. Here are five steps to help you build a personalized self-care plan that works for you.

## Step 1: Fine-Tune Your Understanding of Self-Care

Self-care is any activity that we intentionally do to take care of our mental, emotional and physical well-being. Self-care is those activities that refuel us, nourishes us, and give us energy—they are the self-initiated, proactive actions we take to promote good health and well-being in our lives. Research suggests that self-care fosters resilience and equips us to manage stress better. Self-care is for everyone.

## Step 2: Determine Your Stress Level

It is important to recognize stress and how it impacts you. While some stress can be positive and motivating, many people don't recognize the toll that stress can take on their relationships, work and health. A quick way to assess your stress level is to review the signs of stress below. Or, go back and try the tools provided in [Keeping an Eye on Stress and Mental Health](#)

Physical Effects	Psychological/Emotional Effects	Behavioural Effects
<b>Increased frequency of</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> nausea or dizziness</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> diarrhea or constipation</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> fatigue</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> headaches</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> sleeplessness</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> problems concentrating</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> muscle tension</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> hypertension</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> loss of sex drive</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> frequent colds</li></ul>	<b>Feeling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> moodiness</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> general uneasiness</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> depressed or general unhappiness</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> negative, cynical</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> nervous, anxious</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> agitation, inability to relax</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> helpless, not good enough</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> overworked, out of control</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> underappreciated</li></ul>	<b>Showing signs of</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> eating more or less</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> sleeping too much or too little</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> procrastination or neglecting responsibilities</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> low productivity, taking work home</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> isolating or avoiding others</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> complaining frequently about work</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> using alcohol or drugs to relax</li></ul>

### Step 3: Identify Your Current Stressors

Reflect on the specific situations, events, things, or people that cause you stress in your work and personal life. Keep in mind that stressors can also be general (such as having too much to do, having too many demands or responsibilities, or inadequate rewards). Stressors can also be internal or external.

- **Common Internal Stressors:** negative self-talk, pessimism, unrealistic expectations, rigid thinking, lack of flexibility, perfectionism, chronic worry
- **Common External Stressors:** work, significant life changes (such as getting married, moving, having a baby), school, relationship or family problems, financial problems, pressure to perform without resources, unrealistic workloads or demands, community conflicts, health concerns or illness

**Optional exercise:** For a list of external stressors or life events that typically cause stress, see the Holmes-Rahe Stress Inventory. <https://www.stress.org/holmes-rahe-stress-inventory>

After identifying your list of stressors, list your five most significant stressors in the *Current Major Stressors* column in the table in Step 5.

### Step 4: Identify How You Usually Cope with Stress

Healthy (Positive) Strategies	Unhealthy Strategies
<input type="checkbox"/> Deep breathing	<input type="checkbox"/> Lashing out
<input type="checkbox"/> Meditation	<input type="checkbox"/> Becoming sedentary
<input type="checkbox"/> Healthy eating	<input type="checkbox"/> Try to do it all
<input type="checkbox"/> Listening to music	<input type="checkbox"/> Acting aggressively
<input type="checkbox"/> Journaling	<input type="checkbox"/> Overeating
<input type="checkbox"/> Exercising	<input type="checkbox"/> Skipping meals
<input type="checkbox"/> Reading	<input type="checkbox"/> Smoking or over drinking
<input type="checkbox"/> Going for a walk	<input type="checkbox"/> Pacing
<input type="checkbox"/> Taking a bath	<input type="checkbox"/> Biting your fingernails
<input type="checkbox"/> Socializing with friends	<input type="checkbox"/> Taking drugs
<input type="checkbox"/> Sitting outside and relaxing	<input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawing or isolating from family and friends
<input type="checkbox"/> Engaging in a hobby	<input type="checkbox"/> Dangerous or reckless driving
<input type="checkbox"/> See a counsellor	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Follow faith or spiritual beliefs	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____	

## Step 5. Create Your Self-Care Plan

Stress can be managed by implementing both direct and indirect self-care coping strategies.

**Direct strategies** are approaches that create space between a person and stressful situations. They include:

- **Reframing:** taking steps to change your perception or attitude towards the stressor (R)
- **Limiting:** limiting your contact or exposure to the stressor (L)
- **Eliminating:** (E)
  - removing yourself from the source of the stress
  - removing the stressor

**Indirect self-care strategies** (SCS) help minimize the impact of stressful situations by helping a person cope or refuel. Some examples include:

### Physical Self-Care

- ☐ Eat healthy food to maintain energy
- ☐ Exercise regularly—go for walks, hikes, do yoga
- ☐ Attend to health issues when they arise
- ☐ Take meal breaks at work
- ☐ Take holidays/vacations
- ☐ Get good quality sleep
- ☐ Get outside in nature
- ☐ Get a massage
- ☐ Dance

### Mental Self-Care

- ☐ Turn off electronic devices
- ☐ Journal your thoughts and feelings
- ☐ Meditate
- ☐ Listen to guided meditations
- ☐ Listen to calm music
- ☐ Read inspiring quotes or stories
- ☐ Colour or paint
- ☐ Find a creative DIY project
- ☐ Listen to inspirational podcasts
- ☐ Ask for help when you need it

### Emotional Self-Care

- ☐ Spend time with loved ones
- ☐ Engage in activities that bring comfort, such as taking a hot bath
- ☐ Read light-hearted books
- ☐ Slow your breathing
- ☐ Take a 10-minute break
- ☐ Watch a favourite show
- ☐ Make a gratitude list
- ☐ Join a support group

### Relationship Self-Care

- ☐ Take recreational time with a partner or spouse
- ☐ Take recreational time with children
- ☐ Take recreational time with friends
- ☐ Spend time with your or a friend's pet
- ☐ Going to a social group
- ☐ Connect with older relatives
- ☐ Seek out support from family and friends
- ☐ Accept nurturing from others

Use the chart below to list your current major stressors, your current self-care strategies, and additional self-care/coping (direct or indirect) strategies you can integrate into your life (on a daily or weekly basis).

Current Major Stressors (from Step 3)	Current Self-Care Strategies (from Step 4)	Additional Self-Care/Coping Strategies (Direct* and Indirect Strategies) (from Step 5)

\*R-Reframe L-Limit Exposure E-Eliminate

*Adapted from: Jeffries, C. Behring, S.T.; SUN Program—How to Create an Individualized Self-Care Plan. March 2015.*

#### Additional Sources and Resources:

- Mayo Clinic Stress Management--Relaxation Techniques: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/relaxation-technique/art-20045368>
- Mayo Clinic Mindfulness Exercises: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>
- Calm--Daily Calm--10 Minute Mindfulness Meditation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZToicYcHIQU>
- Self-Care Resources for Health Care Workers during COVID-19 (CAMH): <https://www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19/information-for-professionals/self-care>

# Helping Employees Manage Change

COVID-19 has impacted us on an individual, social and global level. Organizations and businesses have also been impacted and have not been able to sidestep “change.” Some organizations will have to contend with disastrous negative consequences, the minority might even see positive results, and some will sit in-between. However, all leaders of teams, in any context, will have to lead and assist their employees who are not only emotionally impacted by a change in their personal lives, which may show up at work, but also by organizational change.

## Be a Change Agent

As a manager or supervisor, you are the “Change Agent,” the person who acts as a catalyst and assumes the responsibility for managing change. Your role is even more critical in light of the continually advancing changes that COVID-19 brings with it. Of course, employees will have varying reactions to change; however, it would be reasonable to say that this time, in particular, is an incredibly emotionally unsettling time for employees. The following strategies will assist in leading employees through this difficult time, but heed the advice yourself as well, if needed.

## The Cycle of Change

William Bridges, a change management consultant and author, developed a model which focuses on transition, not change. The distinction is this: change happens TO people and can happen very quickly, whereas transition is INTERNAL to the person and can take longer for the person to adjust depending on a number of variables. The three-phase model includes stage 1 - “Endings,” stage 2 - “Neutral Zone,” and stage 3 - “New Beginnings.”

### Ending, Losing, and Letting Go

Ending, Losing, and Letting Go are where we disengage from the old. It involves loss, grief, shock, numbness, denial, anger, hurt, unease, resistance, blaming, complaining, feeling sick, doubt, and stress.

#### You can support your employees by:

- Giving them the time and space to come to terms with the situation and its repercussions for them.
- Being transparent and providing as much information as possible on a regular basis that reinforces why the change is important (in reaction to external change).
- Encouraging questions and ensuring there are plenty of avenues for issues, feelings and concerns to be discussed.

### Neutral Zone

The Neutral Zone is where we have come to terms with the notion that change is occurring, but we have yet to connect fully, or understand the new normal. It involves feelings of indecision, chaos, unknown, anxiety, fear, and confusion.

#### You can support your employees by:

- Providing as much information as possible on a regular basis.
- Keeping them focused with short-term objectives and goals, while at the same time helping them to see the bigger picture.
- Quickly addressing rumours.
- Keeping them up to speed with time frames for when and how the change will take place.
- Involving them as much as they want to be involved and can be

## New Beginnings

New Beginnings is where we begin to understand and connect to the new. It involves energy, creativeness, renewed purpose, renewed direction, growth, and cooperation.

**You can support your employees by:**

- Rewarding and reinforcing their successes.
- Reviewing and reflecting on strengths and skills they demonstrated through the change process.
- Analyzing the change process and highlighting strategies for further change.

### Tips to Help Employees Deal with Change

- Create a positive vision of what change may look like at the onset.
- Be human and transparent that you too have similar feelings (“we are all in this together”).
- Normalize that a range of emotions in the change process is to be expected. Listen and understand the emotion presented in the moment (as the presented emotion is not always what the true emotion is at a deeper internal level). Encourage employees to discuss their true feelings and what might be triggering them.
- Communicate directly, honestly and calmly. Share hard truths as soon as you are able. Encourage honest and challenging discussion.
- Don’t ask an employee to snap out of it or pull themselves together. Denying their feelings may only drive them deeper into negative feelings.
- Help the individual to find ways to manage their feelings to organize their thinking patterns. People with an unbalanced emotional state have trouble processing and analyzing thoughts and feelings.
- Encourage and role model self-care.
- Suggest and create time for proactive stress management techniques, such as a dedicated time to talk about issues at team meetings and remind the group that you want everyone to feel “safe” in sharing their feelings; or begin team meetings with a deep breathing technique.
- Encourage employees to reach out for individual counselling support.
- Distribute EFAP brochures and phone numbers for easy access.

### Additional Strategies for Leaders

- Be consistent in disseminating information to all stakeholders and be transparent in your message. Gene Klann, the author of the book “Crisis Leadership,” suggests the “3Rs: Review, repeat, reinforce”.
- Stay assertive, grounded, and time-directed to have others follow your example.
- Don’t let people get lost in the negative. Instead, address worries and fears as soon as they emerge and then present a vision of hope and positive outcome for the future.
- Be visible, available, show genuine concern for people, and appeal to employees’ sense of principles and morality which are essential to them as individuals, i.e., courage, community, etc.
- Be willing to access support for yourself if you need it. Being in a leadership role can be onerous, and it is easy to overlook how you feel when you are focused on others. However, your employees need you physically and emotionally well, and self-care is equally important for leaders.





# Identifying and Responding to Employee Burnout

Burnout can affect not only an employee's work but also their relationships and their health. Therefore, it's essential to know what burnout is and its symptoms so you can spot them quickly and take steps to support an employee who is struggling.

Burnout is the effect of chronic, long-term job-related stress. This stress leads to the inability to function well at work or in your personal life. As a result, most people suffer physical and emotional exhaustion, cynicism, a loss of personal identity, and a reduced sense of accomplishment in their work. Even if you love your job, you can still be at risk for burnout.

According to the World Health Organization, "Burnout is a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. It is characterized by feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one's job, feelings of negativism or cynicism related to one's job, and reduced professional efficacy. Burnout refers specifically to phenomena in the occupational context and should not be applied to describe experiences in other areas of life."<sup>5</sup>

The top five causes of employee burnout are:<sup>6</sup>

1. Unfair treatment at work
2. Unmanageable workload
3. Lack of role clarity
4. Lack of communication or support from manager
5. Unreasonable time pressure

Understanding the symptoms of burnout gives you the ability to intervene before things get worse. Here are some signs that an employee may be heading toward burnout.

- Decreased productivity, efficiency and energy
- Reoccurring sickness or absence from work
- Increased errors
- Self-doubt or difficulty making decisions
- Reduced job satisfaction
- Sarcasm or negativity
- Cynicism towards colleagues or work
- Irritability
- Decreased motivation
- Poor workplace morale
- Complaints of headaches or fatigue

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<sup>5</sup> World Health Organization: <https://www.who.int/news/item/28-05-2019-burn-out-an-occupational-phenomenon-international-classification-of-diseases>

<sup>6</sup> Gallup: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/237059/employee-burnout-part-main-causes.aspx>



### How can you help prevent employee burnout?<sup>7</sup>

1. **Make time and listen.** Make regular check-ins with employees a high priority. Ongoing open communication between manager and employee, where an employee feels their manager will address workplace problems and genuinely cares about them, reduces the likelihood that they will experience burnout.
2. **Clarify roles and responsibilities.** Be upfront and clear in sharing your expectations and the requirements and duties of the job. Check in with the employee to address any confusion and ensure they are clear about the degree of authority they have within their role.
3. **Encourage teamwork.** Co-workers are a vital element of emotional support for employees who are on the road to burnout. Supporting work teams to engage in effective and frequent communication helps build bonds, team cohesion, and accountability. In environments where co-workers experience connection, respect, and mutual care, teams and the individuals within them thrive.
4. **Invite everyone's opinion.** When employees believe that their viewpoints and opinions matter, they feel included and valued. Employees often take on more responsibility for their performance and experience an increased sense of ownership and control over their work when their manager regularly seeks their input and encourages their creativity.
5. **Make work purpose-driven.** Employees who feel their work is important and connected to the organization's mission are far less likely to experience burnout. Help employees feel a sense of purpose at work by showing them how their role and daily work contribute to fulfilling its mission.
6. **Focus on strengths-based feedback and development.** Identifying employees' strengths, celebrating what they do best, and guiding them into tasks and opportunities that maximize their natural talents encourages

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<sup>7</sup> Gallup: <https://www.gallup.com/workplace/313160/preventing-and-dealing-with-employee-burnout.aspx#ite-313229>

their best performance. Employees who are supported to do what they do best are more engaged, effective, less stressed, and less likely to experience burnout.

7. **Encourage work-life balance.** Encourage taking meal breaks and getting outside or taking a walk during their workday. Review workloads regularly to ensure they are manageable and invite employees to let you know if they feel too busy or have spare capacity. Focus on the completion of tasks rather than counting the hours an employee works. Lastly, encourage employees to disconnect from work email during off-work time and take their allotted vacation time.

### Dealing with employee burnout.

There can be many contributing factors to employee burnout, heavy workload, lack of clarity around roles, lack of leadership, or unfair treatment. Regardless of the reason, it is essential to connect directly with the employee to identify the cause.

- Aim to have an in-person or face-to-face conversation via video conferencing.
- Keep what they share confidential and private.
- Be careful not to make assumptions or to steer a conversation to what you think the problem is. For example, talking about job struggles can invoke anxiety and worry for employees.
- Ask empathetic, open-ended questions that invite them to be honest with you.
- Work to help find solutions to mitigate any workplace contributing factors. For example, solutions may involve adjusting workload expectations, reducing time pressures, protecting them from interactions with unreasonable or demanding customers, or improving workplace communication.
- Remind the employee of the benefits and supports available to support the employee, such as personal counselling or coaching services available through the EFAP.
- Set a time to follow up on how the employee is doing and see if the changes have effectively reduced burnout.

# How to Talk with an Employee or Colleague about their Mental Health

It may feel daunting to decide to talk with someone out of concern for their mental health, especially an employee or colleague. You may wonder what's appropriate to say, whether you will come across as judgmental or fear that they will misinterpret what you are seeing.

If someone is struggling with mental health concerns, open, non-judgmental communication and connection are what they need most - as no amount of hiding will help them feel better or deal with their challenges effectively.

At some point, it's much better to deal with a suspected problem directly and offer what may be much-needed help or support.

## Everyone needs help sometimes.

Below are some tips and strategies for recognizing when an employee or colleague might need a helping hand and how to reach out in a respectful and supportive way.

Here are a few signs that things may not be going well for an employee or colleague:

- Arriving late for work more often than not (or not checking in regularly if working remotely)
- Frequently calling in sick
- Making up excuses for overreacting or becoming angrier than the circumstance warrants
- Not remembering what to do or not being able to concentrate
- Making excessive mistakes - or performing inconsistently or below normal levels
- Shifting unexpectedly from easy-going to grouchy, becoming difficult to be around, snapping at colleagues for no reason
- Avoiding responsibility or refusing to take responsibility
- Avoiding socializing and uncharacteristically withdrawing from conversations
- Showing up at work with signs of fatigue or exhaustion.

## Knowing when and how to help.

When you think someone might need a helping hand and you're willing to offer them yours, check in with yourself before you do anything. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is this the best time for you to have this conversation?
- Are you feeling calm enough, well enough, strong enough?
- If you are, great! If not, take a moment to get yourself grounded so you can focus on the other person during the conversation.

Be prepared for a variety of responses. They might be open to talking to you, become emotional, or become angry or defensive if they are not ready to hear what you have to say.

Whatever their response, know and maintain your boundaries and respect the other person's willingness or unwillingness to accept your support. You are simply trying to state what you're observing and offering support in response.

## Follow these five steps to lend a helping hand:

1. Ask if your employee/colleague is willing to chat with you. Find a quiet, private space for this conversation or ensure privacy (on both ends) of a phone or video call.
2. Focus the discussion on what you've noticed - changes in behaviour, appearance, performance, or attitude - and share your concern for their well-being.

3. Leave room for a response and listen to them without judgment. This is crucial and will go a long way to invite openness and sharing. (If they aren't ready or willing to talk, remind them that you are there to talk and listen any time.)
4. Ask them what they need and how you can help. Reassure them that you will respect confidentiality.
5. Depending on the issues that surface, suggest they access appropriate professional support and remind/inform them of any available services such as their EFAP, extended health benefits, or other community health services. If they are reluctant to call or reach out on their own, you can suggest you make the initial call together.

### **Remember, you're not there to diagnose the problem.**

It's not on you to diagnose any issue or provide counselling. Instead, you are offering a helping hand to someone you are concerned about, suggesting practical help. You are fulfilling your mandate as a manager, which is to:

- Ensure the psychological health & safety of your employee or colleague.
- Confirm that their well-being is appropriately supported.
- Verify that they can continue to work safely.
- Take appropriate action to address any issues related to poor performance and the well-being of the overall team.

While you should always emphasize that sharing personal information is voluntary and that a person can maintain their privacy, as a manager, you may need to establish a performance management plan if changes in workplace behaviour have become an issue of concern.

### **Giving and receiving help.**

Remember, it is reasonable for you to ask for support before, during, and after this process. Consult with your manager, HR staff, or your EFAP for guidance and feedback on your approach.



# How to Respond to Critical Incidents

As a manager, you may be called upon to respond to traumatic events in the workplace. A critical incident is “any situation faced by employees that causes them to experience unusually strong emotional reactions and that has the potential to interfere with their ability to function, either at the scene or at a later date or time.”<sup>8</sup>

## Critical incidents can include:

- Workplace injuries or accidents
- Serious illness, injury, or death of a co-worker
- Workplace violence, such as a threat or an act of violence toward a staff member
- Major downsizing/layoffs
- Workplace abuse
- Death of an employee’s family members or significant other
- A health epidemic

Traumatic events have the potential to impact your employees and colleagues significantly. It is important to note that an event need not necessarily be “out of the ordinary” or uncommon within a specific workplace to be a critical incident. In determining whether an event constitutes a critical incident, the traumatic *impact* of the event is more important than its *type* or *frequency*.

## Some common signs and symptoms of critical incident stress include:

Physical	Chills, thirst, fatigue, nausea, fainting, twitches, vomiting, dizziness, weakness, chest pains, headaches, rapid heart rate, muscle fatigue
Cognitive	Confusion, nightmares, uncertainty, hypervigilance, suspiciousness, intrusive images, blaming others, poor problem solving, poor memory, poor concentration, changed alertness
Emotional	Fear, guilt, grief, panic, denial, anxiety, agitation, irritability, depression, intense anger, apprehension, overwhelm
Behavioural	Withdrawal, daydreaming, decreased work quality or productivity, inability to rest, pacing, speech changes, alcohol or substance use

## Why is it Important to Respond to a Critical Incident?

It is important for managers to deal with critical incidents effectively. Employees exposed to traumatic workplace events typically experience considerable psychological and emotional distress. Research demonstrates that employees who do not receive appropriate support following a critical incident are considerably more likely to

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<sup>8</sup> Jeffrey Mitchell, PHD

experience significant health problems, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In addition, such employees are significantly more likely to experience work-related difficulties, including increased attendance problems and lower productivity. To protect and support employees, managers should respond quickly when a critical incident in their workplace occurs.

#### **In the immediate aftermath of a critical incident, follow these tips:**

- Remain calm. Taking charge requires focus, stable behaviour, and a calm spirit.
- Call 911, if appropriate, and contact security. Follow your organization's emergency protocol.
- Protect employees from upsetting or disturbing scenes. Move them to a separate area where they can gain a greater measure of control over their emotional reactions. Take steps to provide for their basic needs and comfort, such as offering water, tea, fruit juices, fruits and vegetables.
- Meet with each member of your team who was involved in or aware of the critical incident. Share as much as you can about what happened, what is happening now, and what will happen in the future. Remember, information increases a sense of security and safety.
- Listen and validate employees' emotional reactions to the critical incident. Let them know that it is okay to experience feelings of shock, fear, confusion, anger, or helplessness. Tell them that these are all normal human reactions to an abnormal event.
- Avoid minimizing the trauma in an attempt to help them feel better. Offer support.
- If employees are extremely distressed and unable to stay at work, ensure they have access to safe transportation to take them home. Provide employees who continue working with extra breaks, if necessary, and permission to talk with one another about the incident.
- Post and provide the EFAP toll-free number to employees. By calling the EFAP, they can access immediate support from an EFAP counsellor by phone 24/7.

#### **Remember...**

Your Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) can play an instrumental role in helping minimize the impact and disruption caused by a critical incident. The EFAP provides a full range of services to help employees and managers cope with the after-effects of critical incidents and offers consultation services to managers and supervisors to help determine whether any worksite interventions or counselling services for affected employees may be necessary or helpful.

# Supporting Employees Who Are Grieving

As a manager, you may be required to respond to employees who have experienced a loss during the pandemic. A loss can take many forms and can include some of the following:

## Personal Loss

- The death of a spouse, child or another family member
- Divorce or break-up
- A change in household make-up (e.g., a child leaving for university)
- The loss of physical or intellectual ability due to an accident or medical diagnosis

## Workplace-related Loss

- The death or serious illness of a co-worker
- Large-scale changes in the workplace
- A demotion or unwanted change in workplace role
- A significant role or job expectation change

Your role as a manager will be to help support your staff who are grieving. Here are some tips to help you feel more comfortable responding to their needs.

Your employee is the expert in their own grief:

- Trust that your employee knows what they need while they are grieving. They will know what feels supportive and what does not.
- **Remember that grief involves a range of emotions**, including anger, guilt, fear, and confusion. All of these are normal reactions to grief.
- **Recognize that grief almost always lasts longer than the time society gives people to experience it.** For example, while an employee who has lost a loved one may return to their job within a few weeks, their grief process may go on for many months.
- **Be patient and understanding.** Appreciate that grieving employees may display less than their best performance initially but expect a return to their best over time.
- **Remember that some people feel a need to process their feelings and to talk about what they are experiencing.** Others may wish instead to focus on their work or on getting things done. Both of these responses are normal—there is no one “right” way to grieve.

### Tips for talking to employees:

Here are some phrases that might be helpful when talking to grieving employees:

Empathize:

- How are you doing?
- Would you like to talk about your experience, or would you prefer to focus on your work?
- If you want to talk, my door is always open.

Support:

- Is there anything I can do to help?
- Is there anything you need me to share with others?
- What do you need from me at this time?
- Is there any work that you would like reassigned?

Provide Resources:

- Information on coping and counselling through EFAP is available.

## When supporting employees who are grieving:

### Do...

- ✓ Respect a grieving person's desire for privacy--honour closed doors and silence in conversation.
- ✓ Let impacted employees know that you care about their well-being.
- ✓ Take your cue from the grieving employee(s) and support them in whatever way they indicate they would like to be supported.
- ✓ Anticipate that an employee may need to talk about their loss many times, particularly during anniversaries, holidays, birthdays, and other important times.
- ✓ Engage the support of other colleagues. Colleagues may feel comfortable offering to assist with personal tasks—cooking a meal, caring for pets, helping with shopping or errands, may also be appreciated.
- ✓ **Remind employees that EFAP offers free, confidential support 24/7 to help them cope with grief and loss.** EFAP can also provide helpful information, materials, short-term counselling, and referrals to long-term counselling if needed.

### Do not...

- ✗ Use phrases like “It was for the best,” or “Everything will be okay,” or “You have to be strong for the kids.” These statements may seem well-intentioned but can often be experienced as unsupportive.
- ✗ Turn conversations into forums for your own experience.
- ✗ Judge the way that your employee grieves. There is no wrong way to grieve.

### Take care of yourself:

- ✓ An employee's loss may bring up feelings for you. However, remember, you can best take care of your employees if you take care of yourself.
- ✓ Remember that you are not alone in providing support. The Human Resources Department and EFAP are available to consult and help you deal with a situation involving a workplace loss. All you have to do is call.

### Honour the loss of a colleague:

It can be important to find ways to acknowledge the person who has died, especially if that person was a co-worker. Here are some suggestions for ways that you can honour a person in the workplace:

- Create a memorial board or book.
- Collect money for a charitable donation.
- Hold or participate in a fundraiser for their family.
- Create an office memory book for the family.
- Share tributes in employee newsletters.
- Plant a tree or erect a park bench in honour of the employee.

## EFAP Supports and Services for Individuals

The EFAP is a 24/7/365, **confidential and voluntary** employee well-being support service that helps employees and their families find the right options and solutions to resolve personal, family, or work-related challenges. Whether they want to improve communication in their relationships, improve mental well-being, stop smoking, or find a better way to manage personal finances, the EFAP can help employees and their families take steps towards better health and well-being. Services include:

### Counselling Services

- Crisis 24/7 telephone access to counsellors
- Personal counselling--Effective short-term, professional counselling for individuals, couples, and families. Available to address a broad range of personal, family, work and life concerns. Available as in-person, telephone, e-counselling, or video sessions.
- iCBT –therapist guided internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

### Work-Life Consultation Services

- Career counselling
- Child/elder-care consultation
- Financial coaching and credit counselling
- Health coaching
- Legal referral and consultation
- Life coaching
- Nutritional counselling
- Resource kits for family stages, life's stages, and mental health
- Smoking cessation support

### Online Health and Wellness Resources

(myfseap.ca)

24/7 access to myfseap.ca online health and wellness information, resources, and tools for personal change and development, such as:

- Resource Library (articles, self-assessment tools, videos, ...)
- COVID-19 Support Resources
- Online programs and self-guided learning modules
  - *Stress Strategies*
  - *Stronger Minds by Mind Beacon*
  - *Evolution Health* (for depression, anxiety, smoking cessation, healthy weight, and more)
- EFAP Solutions newsletters
- Information of EFAP services and benefits

## Supports for Managers and Supervisors



### Manager Consultations

In addition to providing supports for employees, your EFAP is also available to offer managers, supervisors, and people leaders the advice, guidance, and resources needed to promote and maintain a healthy and resilient workforce.

#### Manager Consultations

Confidential\* telephonic consultations with FSEAP Workplace Consultants are available to help managers manage sensitive employee issues, performance management concerns, workplace conflict, or employees at risk due to mental health concerns or violence in the workplace. Our Workplace Consultants also provide guidance on employee and workplace health and wellness.

*\*Consultations are confidential within the limits of the law. Limits of the law include threats of harm to oneself or others, suspected child and elder abuse, or as ordered by the Courts.*



# Workplace Supports Services

FSEAP offers EFAP promotion, training solutions, and specialized workplace interventions that provide more intensive services to support employee and team well-being, engagement, resiliency, and performance, reduce workplace conflict, and promote trauma recovery.

**Connect with your Human Resources department or your FSEAP EFAP liaison to do a needs assessment, discuss services available, create a plan of action, and discuss any additional pricing.**

## EFAP Promotion and Orientation

Ensuring employees know about the services, supports, and resources available to them through the EFAP has never been more critical. Distributing EFAP brochures and scheduling refresher EFAP Employee Orientation sessions can provide information about the services available to them, confidentiality, and how to access the program. Additionally, as people leaders, you are often the first to hear about or notice when an employee or member is struggling. EFAP Manager Orientation sessions provide a refresher for managers and union leaders about the services provided by the EFAP, how to recognize mental health issues in the workplace, and how to most effectively refer employees to the program.

EFAP Orientation sessions can be delivered in person, virtually, or by video.

## Training Solutions

Our management, organizational, and employee training sessions cover a broad range of topics and issues related to personal health and well-being, team functioning, and organizational development. In addition, FSEAP provides workplace assessment and holistic training as part of our Positive Workplace Framework™ interventions, covering mental fitness, resiliency, and positive leadership, as well as stand-alone workplace health and wellness training. These training sessions can be presented as “Lunch-N-Learns” or more in-depth, multi-hour seminars, workshops, or facilitated discussions at the workplace or via webinar.

EFAP training programs:

- teach and encourage the development of a healthy and productive lifestyle in and outside of work.
- promote awareness of health issues and offer support strategies for dealing with personal and workplace challenges.
- build the skills and capacities of employees at all levels for improved working relationships and organizational performance.
- improve workplace functioning.

Every session is an opportunity to reach out to employees and remind them about how their EFAP can assist them with challenges they may face. For more information, [explore FSEAP's Training Programs.](#)

## Specialized Supports

FSEAP offers specialized solutions to assist organizations in addressing specific employee, team, or workplace issues that can interfere with performance, productivity, and engagement. Our specialized solutions are designed to assist with employee performance issues, workplace conflict, change, psychologically or emotionally related illnesses, and substance abuse.

### Management Referral Program

Workplace consultation and support for managers wanting to address employee performance issues that have not been responsive to normal supervision and organizational interventions.

Services include EFAP intervention services for the referred employee, case management, and follow-up. Management Referrals can be suggested or mandated (employee's attendance at the EFAP is a requirement of continued employment).

### Mediation and Conflict Resolution

Unresolved conflict can severely affect workplace communication, work performance, and employee job satisfaction, and as a result, be costly in terms of lost productivity. Your EFAP Mediation and Conflict Resolution Service is a professional and confidential service designed to assist employees with resolving conflict in the workplace. Some of the services we provide include:

- Group or team interventions
- One-on-one interventions
- 24/7 telephonic support for managers to diffuse any situation

### Specialized Workplace Interventions

On-site clinical support during organizational major change, transition initiatives, or as follow-up to unsettling workplace events. Some of the services we provide include:

- Group or team interventions
- One-on-one interventions
- 24/7 telephonic support for managers to diffuse any situation

### Extended Care

Extended Care is a clinical solution that helps employers reduce the cost of employee absences due to mental health or performance-related concerns, while providing employees with the treatment they need to renew their well-being and ability to stay at work or reintegrate into the workplace. A longer-term counselling service (10 – 20 sessions) that can address a range of concerns including, depression, anxiety, workplace trauma, anger management and grief and loss.

### Substance Abuse Professional (SAP) Services

SAP services provide specialist recommendations for employees in safety sensitive positions who test positive for drugs or alcohol in the workplace. Services to help employees address substance abuse/addiction problems include:

- Accommodation Screening
- Standard SAP Assessment (DOT and Non-DOT)
- Enhanced SAP Assessment
- Specialized Addiction Case Management
- Structured Relapse Prevention



## Critical Incident and Trauma Support

No one can predict when a traumatic event or critical incident will strike in the workplace. As a result, organizations of all sizes will often need immediate support for potentially disruptive events, such as a robbery, an employee's death or suicide, layoff, or traumatic events in the communities in which they work.

Managers, unions, and human resource professionals often benefit from assistance with managing workplace crises. When something happens that impacts you or your employees, Critical Incident Response (CIR) services can effectively support employees in regaining their ability to function normally.

**Connect with your Human Resources department or your FSEAP EFAP liaison to learn more about the CIR service options and possible associated fees.**

### Critical Incident Response Services

Some of the services we provide in response to critical incidents or traumatic events, such as accidents, deaths, acts of violence, and natural disasters, include:

- Immediate telephonic consultation and assessment with our critical incident response personnel to assist with developing a response plan
- Immediate telephonic support for affected employees
- Coordination of on-site response by a specialist(s), for individuals and groups affected
- On-site coaching for organizational leadership
- Assistance for leadership in conducting briefings for employee groups
- On-site one-to-one and group interventions for employees
- Follow-up.

## On-site Clinical Support

### Specialized Workplace Interventions

On-site clinical support during organizational downsizing or layoffs, or as follow-up to traumatic events. Some of the services we provide include:

- Group or team interventions
- One-on-one interventions
- 24/7 telephonic support for managers to diffuse any situation

## Leadership Supports

An essential role of leadership is the ability to guide and lead people on a path to success. Both new and seasoned leaders sometimes need additional support to develop their leadership styles, skills, and competencies to lead teams toward achieving personal and organizational goals.

Coaching assists leaders in achieving a mutually identified set of goals to improve professional performance and personal satisfaction, to drive improvements to the effectiveness of the leader's organization. Coaching focuses on enhancing performance, developing leadership skills, and moving leaders into behaviours that sustain their careers and the organization.

**Connect with your Human Resources department or your FSEAP EFAP liaison to do a needs assessment, discuss service options available, and discuss any additional pricing.**

### Leadership Coaching

Our coaching experts work one-on-one to assist leaders in reaching their highest potential by working with them to resolve daily issues and integrate new behaviours. Through the use of regularly scheduled telephone coaching sessions, our coaches help executives and aspiring leaders build a path to success without the high cost of travel or absence from the office.

