The COVID-19 Digital Care Package

Help Your Employees Feel Better From Afar

As a leader, it's never enjoyable to see any of your team out sick.

Now that we're in the middle of a pandemic, it's even harder to see your employees fall ill. Worldwide, there have been nearly 50 million reported cases of COVID-19, according to John Hopkins University & Medicine.

Luckily of those, 32.9 million have recovered.

For anyone, catching COVID-19 can feel concerning. Not only to you as an employer, but also to the person who is fighting the virus off. Other than the physical challenges of dealing with COVID (extreme fatigue, fever, cough, etc.), there are the mental challenges of dealing with it.

Employees ill with COVID may wonder:

- *Will I recover?*
- *Will I lose my job?*
- *Did I do everything I could to prevent this?*
- *What if my co-workers or family catches it from me?*
- *How do I work from home if I have kids who are also home?*

For some people, there's a lot of worrying that comes along with the virus, too. As a leader, one of the best things you can do is to showcase empathy. Let your employee know that their priority is to get well — nothing else.

That's why we've developed our COVID-19 Digital Care Package. Inside, you'll find what you need to encourage and help your employees sick with COVID-19.

What Leaders Can Do to Help Employees During This Time

We're living in unique times where leaders are being called on to provide reassurance and hope to their workers. As the pandemic wears on, it's becoming more clear how quickly the virus can spread and shut down a brick-and-mortar office and even put remote employees out of commission.

When that happens, it's essential for company leadership to step up with support and guidance. Remember that employees ill with COVID are fighting more than a viral battle. They'll want to know that they'll have a job to return to and a supportive boss who has their back.

What can you do to help? A few ways:

- **Ensure their job security** - As best as you can, share with your ill employee that their job will be there for them once they are back. Remind them that most cases of the virus are mild and that if they rest properly they can get back as soon as the recommended quarantine period is up.

- **Share mental health resources** - Since the start of the pandemic, there have been spikes in the reported cases of anxiety and depression. This can also spike for those who contract COVID-19. Share all available mental health resources at least once a month to let your employees know there's help. Be sure to send an updated list to anyone currently out sick with the virus.

- **Share a list of providers** - To make it easy on your employees, consider providing a list of local providers that are accepted by your insurance. This will make it less time-consuming for them to contact an in-network provider if they don't have a primary doc or need to follow-up with a specialist due to COVID-19 concerns.

- **Be sensitive** - Keep in mind that everyone has different health conditions that could cause them major issues if they were to catch COVID-19. Don't allow mocking of the virus or of those who catch it.

- **Provide reassurance** - Some employees may be worried about catching the virus. Others may care for immunocompromised loved ones and are nervous they'll give it to them. Reassure your staff of all the ways your company is keeping the workplace safe — whether it's remote work opportunities, extra sanitizing measures, social distancing practices, etc.

What Leaders Can Do to Help Employees During This Time (cont.)

- **Practice your own self-care** - Regularly share with employees ways they can take care of themselves. When they focus on stress management techniques daily, it keeps their immunity strong with the ability to fight off viruses. Share your own ideas and practices for self-care.

- **Share any financial aid resources** - If your employee is out of PTO or your company doesn't have the budget to pay them while off sick, find other resources for them. Have your HR rep look into local resources for your employees to use if needed. Meal services, food banks, scholarships or financial aid for household bills, etc. can be a helpful compilation to have on hand and pass along to any ill employee who needs it. Have HR ensure employees that all such conversations are private.

- **Call them** - Employees appreciate it when they hear directly from their supervisors when they're out of the office ill. Give sick employees a call to check-in on them (especially if they live alone) and ask if they need anything.

The most important takeaway? Show support and offer available resources to alleviate the stress on your sick employee. Inside this kit, you'll find a variety of ways to show you're thinking of them, too.