The emergence of Covid-19 has impacted our lives at work in so many ways. It has pushed us to adopt new ways of working and has brought along its fair share of challenges.

The WorkWell Leaders Workgroup built this guide to share concrete tips and actionable measures both employers and employees can take to deal with these challenges.

Some of the key issues addressed in the guide are:

- Dealing with xenophobic / non-inclusive behaviours
- Managing team dynamics due to changes in split team arrangements and working from home
- Supporting distressed employees
THE I.N.C.L.U.S.I.O.N FRAMEWORK

**I**
Be intentional with your choice of information.

**N**
Nurture inclusive behaviours.

**C**
Concentrate on our similarities.

**L**
Listen and respect different perspectives.

**U**
Unite against unconscious biases.

**S**
Seek support if this situation is causing you fear or anxiety.

**I**
Invite patience to deal with changes and inconveniences.

**O**
Be open to flexible work arrangements.

**N**
Nourish your mind, body and soul.
BE INTENTIONAL WITH YOUR CHOICE OF INFORMATION.

What you can do as an Employee:

- Refer to official communication sent from your organisation.
- If internal communication is not available, refer to official public sources of information.
- Do not be consumed by inaccurate updates borne out of fear or panic. Check accuracy of facts before sharing information with friends and family.
- And remember, the information shared by your employer should be kept within your organisation, unless stated otherwise.

What you can do as a Leader:

- Work with other leaders in your organisation to set up proper channels for disseminating information. Establishing a central contact point for employees to obtain clear and accurate information is key.
- Let employees know that they can come to you for information. Equip yourself with accurate information or know where to get the information to be able to answer employees’ questions.
- Use engaging methods such as infographics or videos to communicate the information.
- Tailor the information so that it is relevant to the organisation and suited to the intended employee population.

“HI... MY FRIEND WHATSAPPED ME THAT SHE READ ON WWW.STORYCOULDBEREAL.COM. THAT DRINKING VERY HOT WATER CAN KILL THE VIRUS. SHALL WE TRY THAT?”
Be aware that non-inclusive or discriminatory behaviours can occur in the workplace during this time. Be mindful of your own behaviour.

Understand your organisation’s HR policies on acceptable and non-acceptable behaviours.

Speak out and intervene when you see non-inclusive or discriminatory behaviours. Engage the person in a respectful and courageous conversation to help her/him/them understand the impact of their behaviour.

If you are subjected to non-inclusive or discriminatory behaviours or have observed such an incident, reach out to your leader or HR as soon as possible to report the incident.

What you can do as an Employee:

What you can do as a Leader:

Communicate to all employees regarding the company’s approach on dealing with employees who behave non-inclusively or discriminatorily. Cite examples of what these behaviours could look like.

Establish safe and confidential channels for employees to report incidences of non-inclusive or discriminatory behaviours.

Role-model inclusive leadership behaviours. Leverage the appropriate channels of communication to share your personal examples and stories.

“THAT COLLEAGUE LIVES WITH A HEALTHCARE WORKER... WE SHOULD AVOID HER.”

“THE VIRUS DOESN’T DISCRIMINATE. NEITHER SHOULD WE.”
What you can do as an Employee:

- Empathise with your colleagues who may be having difficulties adjusting in a time of uncertainty and change.
- Be sensitive to your colleagues’ needs and check in with one another regularly and ask them if they need any help.

What you can do as a Leader:

- Create digital gratitude walls or appreciation platforms where employees can share words of encouragement and appreciation with each other. Showcase these examples broadly.
- Use creative ways (e.g. comic strips and humorous articles) to encourage employees to acknowledge issues that are impacting them, commonalities and how we can empathise with others in times of crisis.
- Reach out to them and ask how the team can better support them.

**WORKING FROM HOME, WORKING OFF-SITE, WORKING IN THE OFFICE – WE’RE ALL DOING OUR BEST DURING THIS PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY!**

**THIS IS IMPACTING ALL OF US, IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. LET’S BE MORE UNDERSTANDING OF ONE ANOTHER’S CHALLENGES.**
Be open-minded and listen to various perspectives even if they differ from yours.

Do your research and equip yourself with knowledge about issues from credible sources.

Help colleagues address misconceptions or fill in gaps in their knowledge, if there are any.

Share your feelings of concerns, discomfort or anxiety should they arise.

What you can do as an Employee:

Establish different platforms to listen to employees (e.g. pulse surveys or Ask Me Anything sessions).

Build in action plans to respectfully address these concerns, explain why things need to be done in a certain way and update all employees on the progress of the actions taken.

What you can do as a Leader:

LISTEN AND RESPECT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES.

WELL, I DID STOP WORK AT 4PM TO LOOK AFTER MY CHILDREN, SO IT’S OK IF THERE IS A CALL AT 9PM TONIGHT.

I FEEL THAT TELECONFERENCE MAKES US ALL MORE PRODUCTIVE AS WE FOCUS ON THE AGENDA AND GET THROUGH THE MEETING ON TIME.
UNITE AGAINST UNCONSCIOUS BIASES.

What you can do as an Employee:

- Be conscious about the words you use to describe the virus or associating specific countries or groups of people with the virus.
- Be mindful of your own biases that may arise (e.g. when you see someone sneeze or cough or when you meet people working in healthcare).
- Present different perspectives to help correct biases should you notice them happening around you.

What you can do as a Leader:

- Provide specific examples of the different types of biases and how to guard against them.
- Speak up when you notice unconscious biases and set an example by correcting them.
- Support your employees who are speaking up against biased behaviours.

“I THINK THE VIRUS ONLY AFFECTS THOSE WHO ARE WEAK.”

“I’M NOT SURE THAT OUR COLLEAGUES ARE REALLY WORKING WHEN THEY WORK FROM HOME.”

“LET’S BE FAIR. STEREOTYPING AND MAKING ASSUMPTIONS DOES NOT HELP.”
It is normal to feel some fear and anxiety. Reach out to a trusted colleague or family member for emotional support.

If the anxiety persists and starts to interfere with your daily functioning, this might be a sign to seek professional help. Speak with your leader on how you can get support through the organisation’s Employee Assistance Programme or any other means that the organisation has to support employees’ emotional and mental well-being.

Explore the various grants and assistance schemes that are available.

What you can do as a Leader:

- Regularly communicate updates on the situation. Emphasise that employees’ physical, emotional and mental well-being is a priority.
- Keep employees on work suspension updated of the company’s salary and leave policies.
- Train and activate peer support groups to do virtual check-ins and to look out for any employees that may be feeling anxious.
- Establish professional support services in the workplace. If this is not available, leverage on external resources. Ensure confidentiality is maintained for employees.
- Monitor and check in weekly with at-risk employees such as older employees, pregnant employees and employees with older family members.

“I’M SO WORRIED ABOUT FALLING ILL, NOT BEING ABLE TO FOCUS AND LOSING MY JOB. CAN I SPEAK TO SOMEONE?”

“SURE! WE HAVE THESE RESOURCES AVAILABLE WITHIN THE COMPANY...”
INVITE PATIENCE TO DEAL WITH CHANGES AND INCONVENIENCES.

What you can do as an Employee:
- Make an effort to understand the rationale of new measures that have been put in place by the organisation.
- While some of these measures may cause inconveniences, they are in place to keep everyone safe. Be socially responsible and adhere to them.

What you can do as a Leader:
- Explain the rationale of measures that have been put in place by the organisation.
- Ensure that the implementation of these measures are properly enforced and are consistent across the organisation.
- Acknowledge and listen to employees who face difficulties adapting to these measures. Find solutions to help them overcome these difficulties.

EVEN THOUGH I AM NOT COMFORTABLE WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES, I WILL ADAPT TO THE NEW WAYS OF WORKING.

I AM UNABLE TO MEET MY CUSTOMERS IN PERSON, BUT I WILL CONNECT WITH THEM VIRTUALLY AND GET THE JOB DONE.
Create a space at home that is conducive for work.

Set boundaries and targets to achieve when working from home.

Define your working hours. Just because you are working from home does not mean you have to be working 24/7.

Remember to take breaks to recharge.

Leverage on technology to connect with colleagues. Stay in touch via voice calls, video calls, emails, messaging and webcast sessions.

What you can do as an Employee:

- Clearly define the requirements and boundaries on flexible work arrangements.
- Be patient. Understand that employees will need to take time to get used to a new routine and to adapt to changes (e.g. having to manage children who are on home-based learning).
- Enable employees by ensuring that they have the right resources and support to perform their job from home.
- Schedule weekly team catch-ups by using the appropriate technology. Incorporate personal segments such as sharing glimpses of your home or family members to help employees stay connected.

What you can do as a Leader:

I’LL NEED TO FIGURE OUT A PLAN TO HELP ME MANAGE MY TIME BETWEEN PARENTING AND WORKING.

IT’S GOOD TO HAVE MUTUAL FLEXIBILITY, TIME OFF TO DEAL WITH PERSONAL MATTERS, AS LONG AS THE WORK STILL GETS DONE.
If work has slowed down for you, spend this time learning new things and improving skills. It might be hard to distinguish between work and personal lives, but practise self-care and set appropriate boundaries. Help one another get through this time, by lending a listening ear and sharing useful resources. Maintain your health by exercising regularly and eating well.

What you can do as an Employee:

- Promote empathy across teams by showing understanding of the unique situation that everyone is in.
- Provide inspiration for employees to stay motivated by having regular check-ins and communication.
- Provide resources and support for training programmes.

What you can do as a Leader:

- "WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS!"

NOURISH YOUR MIND, BODY AND SOUL.

_"HOW TO CREATE A WEBSITE"_
WORKPLACE WELLNESS AND YOU
A COVID-19 GUIDE

An initiative by
WorkWell Leaders Workgroup

Supported by
Our Singapore Fund and Hush TeaBar
Formed in May 2018, the WorkWell Leaders Workgroup is an action-oriented community of leaders from various companies, and national agencies who champion workplace mental well-being as a leadership priority through cross-sector collaboration and sharing of best practices.

The Workgroup is currently a volunteer-run, ground-up initiative made up of leaders in C-suite, human resources, diversity and inclusion teams and national agencies who can influence change in their respective organisations, and also beyond.

www.workwellleaders.org
ABOUT OUR SINGAPORE FUND

The OSF supports active citizens who wish to take the initiative to meet community needs, strengthen community spirit, and contribute to nation-building.
ABOUT HUSH

Hush is Singapore's first Silent TeaBar, and a social movement that aims to bring self-care and social inclusion to every workplace, every school and every community.

The Hush Experience, is a unique 4-zone journey of experiential empathy, completely led by our Deaf facilitators and supported by Persons-in-Recovery from Mental Health Conditions (PIRs). Hush is also the first social enterprise in Singapore that is entirely run by the differently-abled to walk the talk in our core mission of community integration and empowerment.

www.hushteabar.com

HUSH+anywhere is a digital space of silence, where you can take time to pause and reflect, breathe to regulate your emotions, and build care and empathy for yourself and others, to foster social cohesion as well as personal and professional resilience.

Building Empathy in the New Norm is what is uniquely Hush. "There is an implicit dimension of diversity and inclusion learning not necessarily covered by therapeutic experts," shared a participant from a MNC after attending HUSH+anywhere.

HUSH+anywhere is our new sustainability model inspired by Covid-19 to meet the unmet need of building psychological resilience for continued personal well-being and workplace performance. This regular online practice is not a 'nice to have' but a critical employee engagement imperative.