

# Healthy Telecommuting: Maintaining Communication

Taught by the Harris Health Employee  
Wellness Team

**HARRISHEALTH** SYSTEM



# Healthy Telecommuting Series

- Healthy Workspace
- Staying Social & Safe
- The Importance of Routine
- Staying Active at Home
- **Communication**

# Outline

- Challenges we may be facing
- Benefits of Communication
- Tips for Managers and Employees
- Professional vs. Personal mental health warning signs
- Resources

# Current Challenges

- Out of sight, out of mind
- Perceived availability
- Technology
- Coworkers left stranded
- Missed body language and cues
- Tracking productivity

# Benefits of Transparent Communication

- Builds trust
- Improved problem solving (fewer problems)
- Provides clarity
- Better relationships both professionally and personally
- Increases engagement
- Improved productivity
- Promotes team building

# If you're a manager...

- Set clear responsibilities and goals
- Establish office hours
- Utilize document sharing applications
- Be present
- Be positive > Heart, Head, Heart method
- Practice active listening
- Set time to meet via phone and videoconference to gauge employee health
- Get feedback on current struggles/performance
- Non-work related check ins
- Be aware of the signs of mental illness

# If you're a coworker...

- Work with manager to set clear responsibilities and goals
- Timeline and accountability, ownership
- Keep daily log of projects and tasks completed, be proactive
- Keep it professional
- Be positive > Heart, Head, Heart method
- Ask when confused or need more clarification
- Practice active listening

## If you're a coworker cont.

- Use instant messaging
- Provide status reports
- Be present
- Establish office hours
- Utilize document sharing applications
- Be prompt and clear
- Be aware of the signs of mental illness



# Professional Mental Health Warning Signs

## Signs

- Erratic work hours/overworking
- Lack of availability
- Missed deadlines
- Poor performance
- Reckless behavior
- Poor time keeping
- Unexplained absences or sick leave
- Difficulty transitioning

## What to do

- [EAP Services for Managers](#)
- Understand & educate yourself
- Be familiar with ADA, FMLA, & Mental Health Parity
- Ask if they are ok
- See the person, not the illness
- Tell your own story
- Take action
- [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

# Personal Mental Health Warning Signs

## Signs

- Frequent physical complaints
- Increased irritability/anger
- Persistent sadness
- Poor sleep patterns
- Excessive worrying
- Suicidal thoughts
- Increased substance abuse
- Reckless behavior
- Withdrawal from social contact

## What to do

- Don't be afraid to ask
- Educate yourself
- See the person, not the illness
- Seek to understand
- Tell your own story
- Take action

# Resources

## Communication Resources

- [WebEx Training](#)
- [Teleworking Securely](#)
- [Managing Anxiety: Coronavirus Fears & Concerns](#)
- [EAP: Mental Illness: Busting the Myths](#)
- [www.flexjobs.com](http://www.flexjobs.com)
- [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org)

## Stress Management Resources

- Employee Assistance Program
  - Online: [www.feieap.com](http://www.feieap.com),
  - 800-638-3327
  - Username: hhs
- Well Powered Living
- Cigna Behavioral Health
  - Visit **myCigna.com** or call the toll-free number on your Cigna ID card.
  - Call Cigna Behavioral at **800.274.7603**.
  - Go to **Cignabehavioral.com** for extra resources.
- Coaching
  - Telephonic health coaching: 855-246-1873
  - Onsite health coaching: Contact Latecia Murphy
    - 713-873-6407 or [Latecia.Murphy@harrishealth.org](mailto:Latecia.Murphy@harrishealth.org)

# Summary

- More is better
- Ask for clarification
- Establish available hours
- Utilize all communication resources
- Be aware of the signs of mental health issues



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