Virtual COVID Crisis Management Strategies (supported by research)

* Virtual mental health programs
* Virtual team building
* Virtual corporate culture (maybe)

Now that we’ve understood the Covid 19 crisis has a negative impact on the employee’s mental health and creates isolation and loss of community, what are some most effective strategies that an organization can take to alleviate the impact?

Firstly, companies should start to pay extra attentions on employee’s mental wellbeing. With many employees working remotely for the first time, isolated from co-workers, friends and family, their daily living routines are disrupted causing added anxiety, stress and strain – physically, mentally and financially. Companies need to be more open and willing to take care of the wellbeing of their employees and create positive workplace culture, especially now.

We’ll break down the strategy into three steps, raise awareness among employees, promote channels to relieve stress, and provide resources for mental health intervention.

# Raising awareness is the fundamental step. In one study, [84% of workers](https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/public-sector/deloitte-uk-workplace-mental-health-n-wellbeing.pdf" \t "_blank) were shown to have experienced problems such as stress, anxiety and depression, to which work had contributed. To add to the strain, over two-thirds said they [don’t feel comfortable](https://adaa.org/workplace-stress-anxiety-disorders-survey) bringing this kind of thing up with their line managers. And that should never be the case. The company should increase conversations around mental health, prepare online sessions, or host events like Mental Health Day to help employee being more aware of their mental wellbeing.

# The next step is to provide channels to relieve stress. Using mobile apps is a great option. Such as Headspace and Calm, which helps users to meditate. Regular virtual workout, meditation or yoga session during lunch hour or every Friday afternoon are also proven to be of great help of managing symptoms of depression and anxiety. For those who are not necessarily a fan of Yoga, offering all employees an annual wellbeing bonus to put forwards anything to do with promoting their health is also a great idea.

For those who are already showing mild symptoms of stress or even mental illness, companies should take responsible of providing professional counselling support or subsidizing treatment activities. Consider offering a healthcare package available that includes cover for psychologists, counselors and a host of alternative medical treatments. Services like this often include a confidential 24-hour support line that covers mental health and wellbeing support.

A virtual community is a group of people who share a common interest or goal and who use the internet to exchange with each other.

As discussed earlier, another impact on the employees by the Covid crisis is the loss of community. With no more watercooler chats, office birthday parties, Friday night happy hour, what are the things that companies can do to rebuild their communities virtually?

Slack is great platform that could provide channels for all employees to talk about work, as well as casually share their experience, hobbies, interests and emotion. We can set up dedicated public channels for discussions on books, movies, recipes, cars, kids, or anything worth sharing in our life. – especially during the pandemic when there is already so much uncertainty and loneliness.

Besides public sharing spaces, Consider setting up small virtual groups of between six and eight people that employees can join for regular interaction and a safe space to process changes in your company, their lives and the current global reality. You can even hire a professional facilitator with experience in mindfulness and personal development to run the sessions.

It is important to create a comfortable team environment that remote workers can rely on. Virtual team building is the ongoing process of bringing remote teams together. It’ll help the team achieve deeper bonds by creating a collaborative environment that’s similar to an in-office setting! Here’s some great activity ideas that can be performed on a group video call:

An online game of Pictionary or office trivia, an icebreaker activity like virtual karaoke, or even solve an escape room as a team. It will be a nice opportunity to relax and connect with friends at work after a long week.

Virtual connection circles will encourage employees working remotely to have more social interactions. It provides them with opportunities to casually share their experience, hobbies, interests and emotion – especially during the pandemic when there is already so much uncertainty and loneliness. We can set up dedicated public channels for discussions on books, movies, recipes, cars, kids or any private chat group for work friends.

1, Focus on employee’s mental wellbeing

* Raise awareness: Online learning sessions…
* Stress Relief: apps, take a day off… meditation yoga
* Active intervention: Virtual counselling support

2, Focus on re-create sense of community

* Community channels: Slack
* Encourage private social circle chats
* Virtual Team building events.

1, Focus on employee’s mental health being

2, Focus on

1, Raise Awareness and encourage openness about mental illness by online learning sessions and campaigns. (Mental Health day..)

         Early-stage prevention and interference…

2, Create mental health toolkit and launch mental health programs

         Pay for virtual therapy and meditation apps for employees, such as headspace and calm

Headspace: 500% increase in interest from companies seeking mental health help for their workforce. …53% of workers feel mental health benefits are now essential

3, Encourage take a day off

         Research TODO: how does taking a break benefits…

4, Provide virtual counseling support via professional agencies.

Prepare affordable, accessible and immediate professional counseling support for employees who have already identified symptoms related to mental health issues.

5, Initiative virtual employee community channels.

Virtual connection circles will encourage employees working remotely to have more social interactions. It provides them with opportunities to casually share their experience, hobbies, interests and emotion – especially during the pandemic when there is already so much uncertainty and loneliness. We can set up dedicated public channels for discussions on books, movies, recipes, cars, kids or any private chat group for work friends.

6, Host regular virtual team building events

Lavison talk about warehouse crisis,

Introduce in general crisis management strategies. General remedy

For amazon focus on three strategies.

<https://www.glassdoor.com/employers/blog/wellness-programs-remote-workers/>

First of all, we suggest the company to pay extra attention to employee’s mental health, and consider mental health programs as must-have rather than a nice to have.

* Virtual Therapy and meditation apps.
* Ontario government’s internet-based Cognitive Behavioural Therapy program

<https://www.morneaushepell.com/ca-en/insights/ontario-government-extends-virtual-mental-health-services-during-covid-19>

https://adaa.org/workplace-stress-anxiety-disorders-survey

https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/public-sector/deloitte-uk-workplace-mental-health-n-wellbeing.pdf

1, Focus on employee’s mental wellbeing

* Raise awareness: Online learning sessions…
* Stress Relief: apps, take a day off… meditation yoga
* Active intervention: Virtual counselling support

2, Focus on re-create sense of community

* Community channels: Slack
* Encourage private social circle chats
* Virtual Team building events.

I am thinking of restructuring my parts. Instead of be like General covid management + strategies for Amazon specific, I’m thinking go with amazon strategy only. First slide (part) will be around mental wellbeing and second slide (part) will be loss of community. What do you think?

Reason for that is I find it pretty hard to separate general and amazon specific strategies, because there’s really nothing special about amazon than any other company…