



works

# Mindful Manager Toolkit

Working from Home  
to Keep Focus



# We are currently in a time where supporting and leading your team to overcome difficulties is more important than ever before.

The outbreak of COVID-19 has brought with it many new challenges, both personally and professionally; with this in mind, the AMH Works team have developed a toolkit that will provide top tips on managing staff remotely, approaching conversations with staff around mental health issues and direct you to sources of further support should you need it. We know this is only a small step in the journey through COVID-19, but using some of the techniques from this toolkit, it is possible to surf the wave, and believe it or not - **cope and work better together**.

## The evidence shows that conversations between managers and employees about mental health issues often don't take place and this is quite worrying.

There are clearly many mental health issues experienced, with 1 in 5 people experiencing a mental health problem at any time and, we know employee's are coping with many more pressures due to the impact of Covid-19, however many employee's report that they couldn't talk to their manager for support if they were struggling to cope.

**As a manager, if you can engender an environment that values positive mental health and focuses on creating an open and honest atmosphere within your team - you'll reap the rewards in terms of clarity around mental wellbeing and improve the mindset of your team, leading to the creation of a healthy, resilient workplace. But how do you handle the conversation? - that's where the Mindful Manager model (LASS) comes in.**



Listen



Ask



Support



Signpost

Now that you know the LASS model, the guide below will provide you with some tips to show you, how to apply the Mindful Manager model during a conversation with an employee around mental health or indeed, any COVID-19 concerns.

### **How are you feeling?**

Genuinely, how are you feeling? Eye contact is important and be prepared to actively listen.

### **Clarify why you are asking.**

I've noticed a change from your usual behaviour. Is everything ok?

### **Signposting**

Have you sought help from your GP?  
Is there anyone else you can talk to?

### **Offering your help**

Is there anything I can do to help?



## Listen

**How are you feeling? Genuinely, how are you feeling?** Eye contact is important and be prepared to listen actively – this involves making verbal noises and non-verbal cues that show you are engaged and paying attention such as nods.



## Ask

**Clarify why you're asking; I've noticed a change from your usual self. Is everything okay?** This means that the question is not asked out of the blue which can put people on the spot and make them feel defensive, showing you have noticed things that don't seem like them in a concerning and supportive way will help the person feel valued and more likely to express their true feelings about the situation. 'You seem a bit (down/angry/frustrated) lately. Is there something worrying you? This is really important to get to the root of the problem.



## Support

**Offer your help where you can; Is there anything I can do to help?** You could explain internal policies in place to help with such issues which include counselling or additional support in the workplace. These things can ease the burden of work and any stress around managing this area of life. Remember, do not take on any more than your job requires, you are also important and need to maintain boundaries for your own wellbeing and safety.



## Signposting

**This is an important step and should always begin with signposting to the GP, they are the beacon of support in the community and can make referrals to most organisations that offer effective support.** Recently a lot of concerns may centre around COVID-19; it's important to signpost people to reputable sources for information around this such as the World Health Organisation, the Public Health Agency or NI Direct. For community support in life-areas affected by COVID-19, the HSC COVID-19 App is great and offers a list of services in areas from finances to parenting and mental health. If the issue is more serious and there is an immediate risk to the safety of the individual, the involvement of emergency services or suicide prevention services such as Lifeline or Samaritans will need to be called upon, so it's important you're familiar with those.

**So there you have it, an easy and practical guide to handling conversations around mental health and in particular COVID-19.**

**Life can seem a bit up in the air with all the stress and uncertainty we face at the moment, becoming familiar and confident in directing support for those that need it is a crucial step in coping and reaching the light at the end of the tunnel - it's always there.**

**AMH Works** provide a range of programmes which support employers to improve mental and emotional well-being in the workplace and create Healthy, Resilient Workplaces.

**To find out more contact AMH Works Manager, Shelly Wilson on 07540124083 or [swilson@amh.org.uk](mailto:swilson@amh.org.uk)**

There may be times when you need extra support. If you're finding things really difficult you might want to speak to your line manager, a GP, Lifeline or Samaritans.

**Further information on sources of support is available on [www.amh.org.uk](http://www.amh.org.uk)**

