

Mental Health Support during the Pandemic

We are currently and will be for some time yet, living and working in strange times. These bring new challenges and stresses to our daily lives, but a key change is that people are generally opening up and talking about mental health and wellbeing more and more. Whilst we have a much better awareness and understanding of these types of conditions, many people still aren't actively seeking support.

According to the World Health Organisation ("WHO"), one in four people will suffer from a mental health condition during their lifetime, so how do you look after the mental wellbeing of your employees to ensure their welfare? How do you keep them socially engaged with their colleagues and motivated if they are working remotely? How do you know what they are telling you how they are feeling is actually how they really feel? These are questions amongst many others that a lot of businesses are asking themselves right now.

Some of our clients have taken out various employee benefits covers, which will include support services such as counselling and GP helplines, and we will have written to you to highlight these important services. Those of you that have private medical insurance through BHIB Limited ("BHIB") will have received a recent communication from us explaining which services you and your employees can access remotely during the pandemic. But what if you don't have any of these benefits in place?

This year, the Mental Health Foundation are running the 'Mental Health Awareness Week' which is taking place between 18th and 24th of May 2020. The theme this year is **Kindness**, and knowing how precious your time is, we wanted to reach out to all of our clients, not just those that have health related employee benefits to provide a central hub of information that we hope will enable you to take care of you, your employees and your family's mental wellbeing.

The Mental Health Foundation

A great place to start is the Mental Health Foundation themselves who have created a [Coronavirus Toolkit](#). This includes dedicated guides to looking after your mental health during the COVID-19 outbreak. Some of the key topics covered here are:

- Loneliness during the Coronavirus
- Mental health tips
- Working from home
- Living with the pandemic if you have an existing mental health condition

The NHS Website

The NHS has a webpage including phone numbers and links to a range of helplines and organisations that can support multiple mental health needs. You can access this here: [NHS Mental Health Helplines](#). This will signpost you and/or your employees to support including but not limited to:

- Anxiety
- Parenting

- Relationships
- Substance abuse

Babylon

Babylon is a company that provides digital GP services, and they've created a video which includes some very practical tips around adapting your usual daily routine to tackle the potential of increased anxiety during the pandemic. This includes staying connected with friends, family and colleagues, introducing a constructive activity to replace your daily commute and ways to keep calm. You can view this here: [Coronavirus Dealing with Anxiety](#).

Babylon also include a free symptom checking service via their app which has been updated to include Coronavirus and is available to download on Apple and Android devices.

We appreciate that this is a totally unique period of time that we're going through and we understand that sadly these resources aren't going to solve everybody's problems but hopefully they will help by providing you with some easily accessible information if anybody needs it.

If you're wondering whether you may have mental health support services via any of your employee benefits, regardless of whether BHIB currently manage them for you, please don't hesitate to contact our Employee Benefits team who will provide you with as much guidance as possible. Our contact details are below:

Tel: 0116 2819 292

employeebenefits@bhibinsurance.co.uk

Any views or opinions expressed in this briefing are for guidance only and are not intended as a substitute for appropriate professional advice. We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure the information contained herein is accurate at the time of writing. In relation to any particular mental wellbeing related issues, readers are advised to seek specific advice.



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