

**SUPPORT FOR MANAGERS, LEADERS:  
HOW TO RESPOND TO YOUR TEAM'S  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
NEEDS DURING  
COVID-19  
PART 4**

Work To Wellness Rehabilitation Inc.

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**WORK TO WELLNESS**

 **BC MUNICIPAL  
SAFETY** Association

 **Sun Life**



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## *“A personal note from Diana”*

**In the midst of a global pandemic, a time of rapid change and added stress, organizations everywhere are leaning hard on supervisors and managers to step up and help support their people. Whether this is a responsibility that feels natural to you, or one that is daunting, there are specific skills you can develop to do this well. Supervisors are the key to workers receiving practical support to do their jobs, and emotional support and resources to stay healthy and productive. Most supervisors express that they care about employees and are uncertain about how to help those who need it. This section of the Toolkit is for you. The contents provide some quick, easy to access information and tips from experts, step by step instructions, and important Do’s and Don’ts.**

**At the core of every supervisor is a person who is also dealing with rapid changes themselves. If you only take one thing away from this section; please take care of yourself first. You will be more effective if you practice the skills learned in Part 1, and use the other tools from a place of calm and good health.**

**Your role as a supervisor brings great responsibility and also opportunity to make a huge difference in**

**others’ lives. I have personally heard hundreds of employees speak about that one person in their workplace that reached out, offered support and showed that they cared. You have an opportunity to stand beside those employees who don’t know where to turn and point them in the right direction to find help. Thank you for having the courage to be great at this!**

*Diana*

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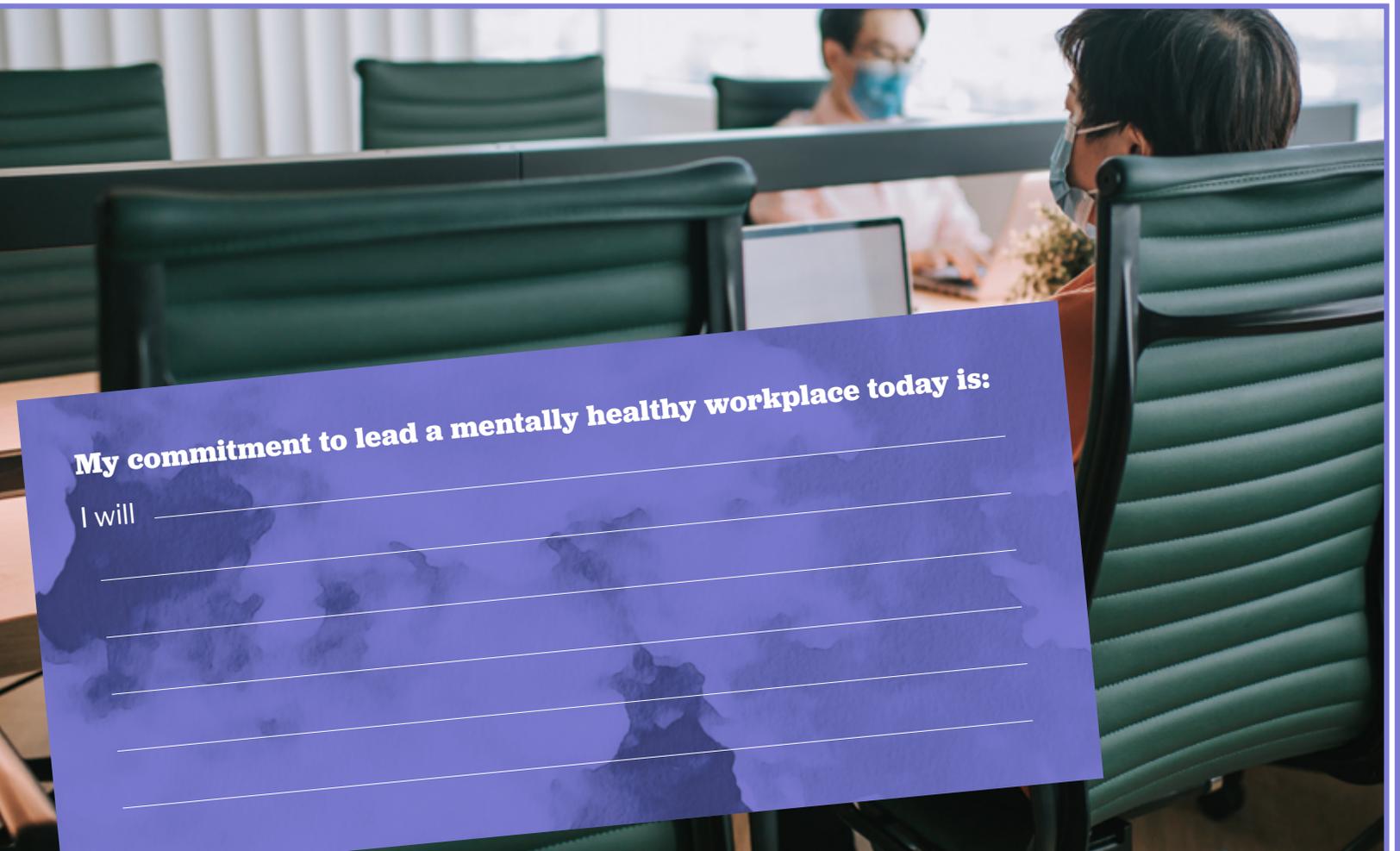


# HOW TO LEAD THROUGH COVID-19: TIPS FOR SUPERVISORS/LEADERS

As a leader, others in your organization look to you for cues on how to manage during times of stress and change. It is important that you communicate clearly and model self-care and appropriate boundary setting.

Consider making a daily commitment for a specific action that will achieve the items below. By sharing your daily commitment with your team you will inspire them to follow your lead:

- Demonstrate “We are all in this together”  
*Example: Ask how your employee is doing with Covid-19 OR be flexible with an employee who has complicated family needs*
- Model clear work/life boundaries  
*Example: Don't send/read emails after hours*
- Maintain confidentiality/respect privacy:  
*Tell a worker about confidentiality you will keep*
- Provide access to care/resources:  
*Example: Find out and share the phone number for counseling available through work*
- “Do” self-care especially when work demands are increased  
*Example: Set one hour a day without phone or technology access – for connecting with your family/friends*



**My commitment to lead a mentally healthy workplace today is:**

I will

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# WHAT CAN SUPERVISORS/MANAGERS DO?



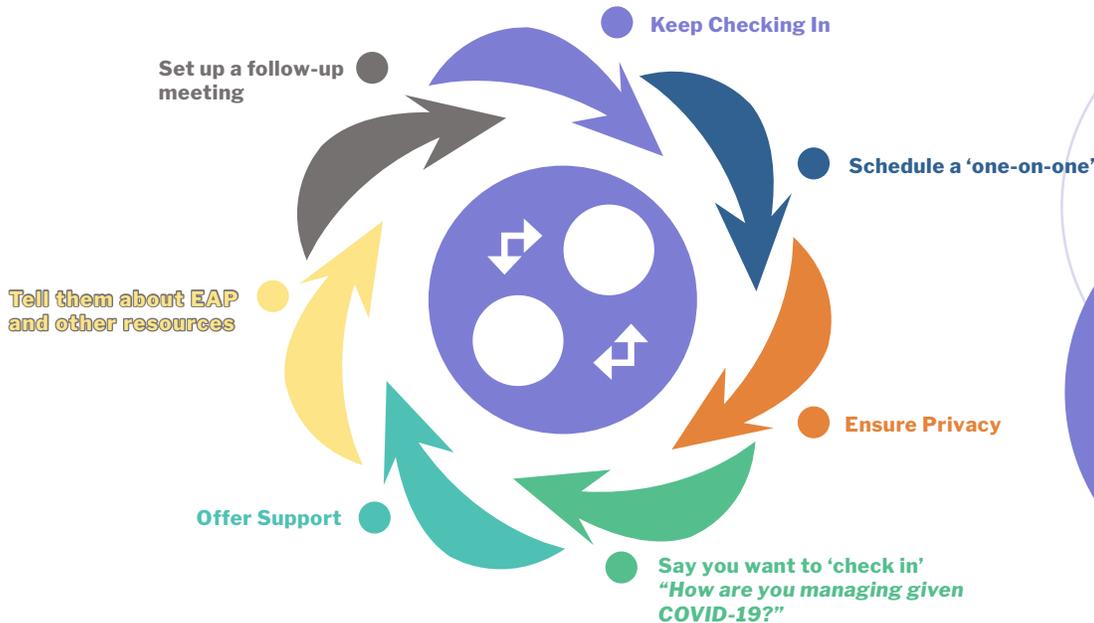
**Supervisor’s Role in Employee Mental Health:**

- Being well; take care of your own mental health. **(See Toolkit Part 1).**
- Act to create a culture that promotes psychological health and safety.
- Build and maintain healthy and respectful work relationships.
- Manage performance, regardless of the cause/reason.
- Identify and address issues (duty to inquire).
- Provide necessary support and accommodation.

# The Check-in

Prepare for the “Check-In”

- Clearly identify the objective performance related behaviours, if relevant.
- Plan for a time when you are calm and not rushed. \*



**65%** of managers/supervisors say they could do their job more effectively if they found ways to more easily manage distressed workers (Ipsos Reid)

- ➔ Schedule a private meeting between yourself and the person. Give advance notice, and what the meeting will be about. Give the meeting a name that is sensitive, such as “One-on-one” or “Check-in” – rather than something that might cause the person more difficulty, For example “Meeting topic: Performance issues to be addressed.”
- ➔ To introduce the meeting, say you want to “check in” to see how everything is going. Ask questions in a sensitive way; and invite the person to share how they are feeling about the work lately. Importantly, ask them how they are managing given COVID-19. How they are feeling allows you to broach the topic of mental health in a natural, less threatening way than might be possible otherwise. You may need to bring up performance issues you have observed. Be honest, upfront, professional and caring in your approach.
- ➔ Give specific information (e.x., EAP or what is covered under your benefits plan) even if the person does not mention mental health issues
- ➔ Tell the person that you can consider helping accommodate them to stay at work, if that is possible. Plan a follow-up meeting. An initial check-in could be overwhelming for an employee; plan for the next meeting.
- ➔ Ensure privacy. Hold the meeting in a private, quiet place. You can video conference, but ensure that you and the person are in a private place.
- ➔ Offer support. Ask if there is any way you can support the person in their role. “How can I support you to be successful in your job?”
- ➔ Keep checking in at regular intervals.

\* image adapted from Sun Life

The ‘check-in’ is a relatively simple, straight forward method, for addressing and keeping an eye on the mental health of your employees. It fosters open communication and prevents mental health issues from going unsupported and increasing in severity.

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## “A WORD” about Privacy

There are rules and laws that protect people’s right to privacy. As a manager/supervisor, you are responsible to know and abide by those rules. Although the rules and laws apply differently to different situations, here’s a few tips to guide you:

### Do’s:

- Ask if there is a health issue that may be impacting them
- Tell a person how to access support/help/care
- Tell a person you will keep confidentiality (unless they might harm themselves or someone else)

### Don’ts:

- \* Ask about a person’s diagnosis
  - \* Ask if they are taking medication
  - \* Ask if they are seeing a psychologist or specialist
  - \* Probe for more details if a person share’s medical details
  - \* Tell anyone if a person shares medical details
- 

## 5 Ways to start the Check IN conversation:

1. How is Covid-19 affecting your family?
2. Who are you connecting with and how?
3. What things are going on that might be affecting how you work?
4. How has work changed for you since Covid-19?
5. If you could change one thing about how work is going for you since Covid-19, what would it be?



# Checklist for Remote Workers & their Supervisors

Psychological safety is a shared responsibility: Checklist

**WORK TO WELLNESS**

JOB DEMANDS	Employee	Employer
What are my key responsibilities for work?	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
What are the deliverables for my role? List them. What are my priorities? – (Number the above list 1-5)	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
JOB CONTROL	Employee	Employer
What is my work plan/schedule for the day?		
What are my meeting needs for my manager/team/clients? (weekly, daily, several times/day)		
What are potential distractions that will impact my work?		
What strategies can I put in place to minimize these distractions?		
JOB SUPPORT	Employee	Employer
What are the technology requirements for my job? (internet speed, video/audio, software, privacy, phone, other)		
In what ways does my supervisor provide support?		
What is a reasonable communication support system?		
What is the nature and frequency of performance feedback? I.e. daily, weekly, monthly.	<input type="radio"/> Daily <input type="radio"/> Weekly <input type="radio"/> Monthly	<input type="radio"/> Daily <input type="radio"/> Weekly <input type="radio"/> Monthly
Social Support – What are my needs for face to face communication from my supervisor/ team/others?	<input type="radio"/> Supervisor <input type="radio"/> Team <input type="radio"/> Others	



<b>PERSONAL LIFE DEMANDS</b>	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Employer</b>
What are the life role demands on me? (childcare, elder care, medical caregiving, home schooling, partner working from home)? What are the priorities? – (Number the above list 1-5)	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>PERSONAL CONTROL</b>	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Employer</b>
What things can I control/ not control? (other family members' schedule)	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
<b>PERSONAL SUPPORT</b>	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Employer</b>
What are my practical support needs in my home working environment? (personal space, scheduled quiet time, frequent breaks)		
What are my mental health needs? (i.e. access to counselor, doctor, EAP)		
<b>SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Employer</b>
What are my unique limitations, challenges or safety risks my supervisor may need to know? (history of mental ill health, special family circumstances, religious considerations, domestic violence)		
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>Employee</b>	<b>Employer</b>
My top 3 challenges for working remotely?	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

\*This checklist is intended as a starting point for dialogue to explore individual needs to thrive in the remote working environment. All information shared via this checklist requires privacy considerations. Additional checklists to explore physical safety needs can be found at various WCB websites. Recommendations can be provided on request. This checklist is not intended as legal or medical advice.

# What did you learn from the Toolkits?

**Part 1** – Covid-19 has caused significant psychological impacts; it's normal for me to feel different.

- I know how to do an awareness check for myself
- I tried a few calming exercises and will practice them
- I can build my wellness recipe

**Part 2** – I learned about verbal judo and 4 steps to identifying and managing distressed people

- 1 - Self-awareness and self-care
- 2 - Active listening
- 3 - Be curious and care
- 4 - Learn to detect distress with “How to Support Others” tool

**Part 3** –

- I learned that substance use happens on a spectrum and there are many options for treatment
- I can assess privately if I have a problem
- I know the Do's and Don'ts of supporting someone with substance use problems
- I can use assertive communication to address substance use concerns in someone else

**Part 4** – Supervisors have a key role to detect and address issues, provide support and access to resources, and manage performance

- I can use the “What can Managers/Supervisors Do” tool to guide me
- Check-ins are important and I plan to do them for my team regularly

We appreciate your participation, thank you!

## RESOURCES:

### Lumino Health:

<https://luminohealth.sunlife.ca/en/find-a-health-care-provider/>

**Excellent Resource: Managing Work-related Psychosocial Risks During Covid-19 reviews 10 areas for workplace action.**

[https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed\\_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms\\_748638.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---safework/documents/instructionalmaterial/wcms_748638.pdf)

**Many free resources, videos to show supervisors how to respond and support workers with mental health impacts.**

<https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/managing-workplace-issues/leadership-development>

### WORK TO WELLNESS

**Supervisor training to detect and address mental health difficulties.**

<https://worktowellness.com/workshop/mental-health/#Part-02--Managing-Minds-at-Work>

**Learn about the psychological risk factors that workplaces can improve on here:** [https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth\\_risk.html](https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/psychosocial/mentalhealth_risk.html)

**A How To Guide to support mental health promotion at your workplace:**

<http://wmhp.cmhaontario.ca/workplace-mental-health-core-concepts-issues>

**World Health Organization guide to Psychosocial Risk Management - This guide has relevant content relating to new risks to worker psychological safety. Consider using sections to start conversations in your workplace.**

[PRIMA-EF Guidance\\_9.pdf](#)



**IT IS  
WORTH  
YOUR TIME TO  
IDENTIFY**

- The psycho-social hazards in your workplace,
  - Who is at risk?,
  - What else is needed to reduce and mitigate those risks?

PLEASE JOIN US FOR

## **PART 5: INDUSTRY LEADERS PANEL**

In this session, Diana Vissers will host a panel of industry leaders who will provide their lens on COVID-19 and the effects on mental health and wellness in the workplace. The panel will include representatives from the municipal, construction, forestry, trucking, and labour.

