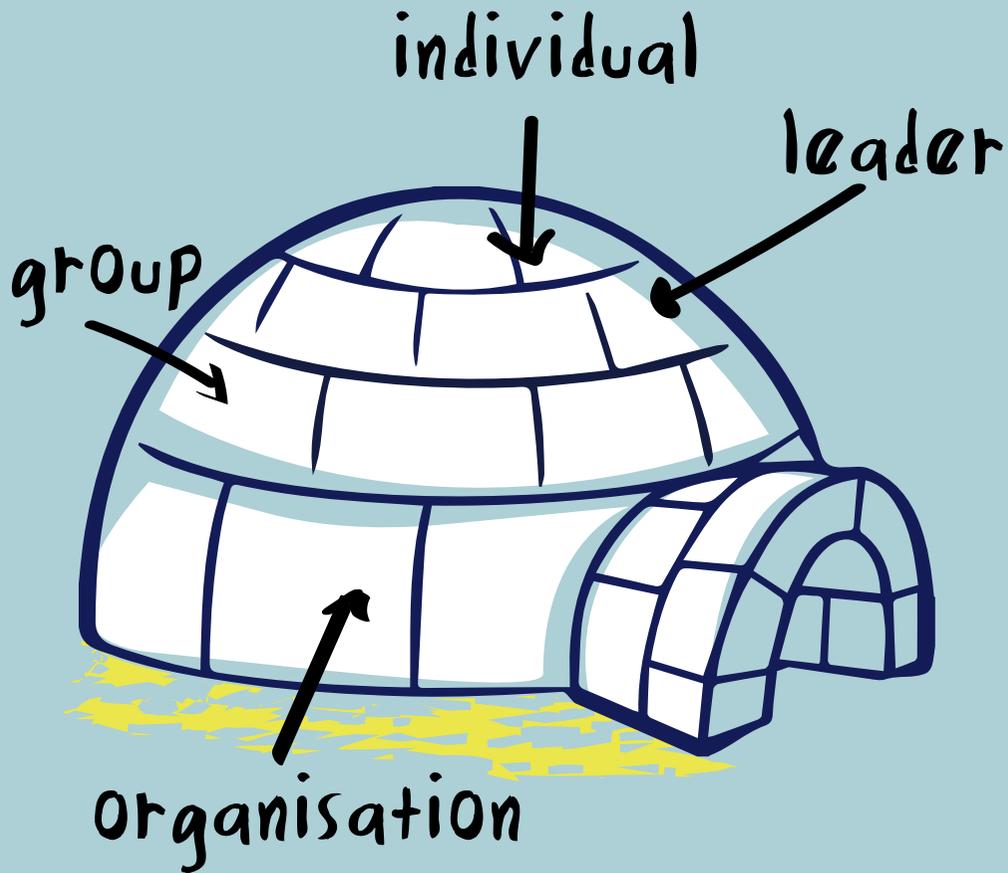


# Guide for Colleagues

What can you do to help protect your colleagues' mental health at work during the Covid-19 outbreak?

# your IGLOO

staying mentally healthy at work  
during the Covid-19 outbreak



## Guide for Colleagues

What can you do to help your colleagues stay mentally healthy at work during the Covid-19 outbreak?

The Covid-19 outbreak has had a profound impact on the world of work. We are facing unprecedented challenges and many people are struggling to cope with the demands from work and home. People may be worried and concerned about health, finances or job security, they may be isolated from others and unable to perform their usual routines. These concerns are normal. In fact did you know that even before the outbreak 1 in 6 people experience mental ill health?

This guide is designed to help you support your colleagues to stay mentally healthy at work during the Covid-19 outbreak. It draws from the latest evidence to outline what works, and what does not, when it comes to working productively when experiencing stress.

We can't do everything on our own. To stay mentally healthy we often need help from others. Colleagues, friends and family, line managers and others can help the individual build their **IGLOO**. Remember, an employee with strong resources is much more likely to stay in and be productive at work.

## What is stress, anxiety and depression?

Mental health is complicated. Everyone's experience of mental health is slightly different. It is sometimes difficult to tell whether someone is experiencing stress, anxiety or depression. A really important sign is a change in the person's behaviour – are they behaving differently? Here are some of the common signs and signals:

- Behavioural signs – struggling with workload, low levels of concentration and focus, difficulty in organising, low productivity, negative attitude, changes in motivation.
- Emotional signs – feeling anxious or irritable, mood changes, changes in how you interact with colleagues, too much emotion, feeling isolated or socially withdrawn.
- Physical signs – tiredness, having sleepless nights, increased drinking and/or smoking, not feeling hungry, headaches.

When employees are supported at work, they are better able to manage their mental health. Use this guide to give you examples of ways you could make your colleagues feel safe, valued and productive at work.



For more details on signs and symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression, and the possible impact on work – visit [Every Mind Matters](#)

## Understanding your IGL00

We all need other people to help us stay happy and healthy. Everyone has their own set of resources inside and outside of work. We call this your **IGL00**. Your **IGL00** is made up of different resources that help you:

**individual** resources – like confidence, self-care looking after your basic needs (e.g. eat, sleep, move, connect)

**group** resources – help from colleagues, friends and family

**leader** resources – help from your line manager, GPs or service provider

**organisational** resources – help provided by your organisation, volunteer groups or charities

## The IGL00 for staying mentally healthy at work during the Covid-19 outbreak includes:

At home, the following actions help	Resources	At work, the following help employees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prioritising self-care</li> <li>● Establishing clear boundaries between work and leisure time</li> </ul>	<b>Individual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating structure in the working day – set out your working hours, break times, divide up tasks into smaller components</li> <li>● Identifying your work priorities – what must be done today, what can wait</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Understanding from others</li> <li>● Receiving non-judgmental support</li> <li>● Staying connected</li> </ul>	<b>Group</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Providing feedback on tasks from colleagues</li> <li>● Giving help when doing challenging tasks</li> <li>● Maintaining social and informal contact</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing health and wellbeing advice and support</li> </ul> <p>If employees are experiencing mental health concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Having a consistent point of contact e.g. GP</li> <li>● Facilitating links to external services and treatment</li> </ul>	<b>Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ensuring the necessary equipment to work safely is provided</li> <li>● Communicating work demands e.g. workload, prioritising job tasks</li> <li>● Giving control over the way the work is done</li> <li>● Providing emotional and practical support</li> <li>● Promoting positive working relationships in the team</li> <li>● Communicating the organisation's response to Covid-19</li> <li>● Exploring work adjustments where appropriate e.g. working hours, review of job tasks</li> <li>● Being available but not intrusive</li> <li>● Agreeing what information about an employee's current situation is communicated to colleagues</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Access to health and wellbeing advice and support</li> </ul> <p>If employees are experiencing mental health concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessing work-focused counselling</li> </ul>	<b>Organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Providing flexible working practices and leave</li> <li>● Providing a safe physical work environment</li> <li>● Providing flexible working practices and leave policies</li> <li>● Providing work-focused counselling</li> <li>● Establishing a culture where mental health and physical health are prioritised</li> </ul>

## How can you help your colleague strengthen their IGL00?

Use the checklist here to see what you can do to help your colleague build their **IGL00**.

1. Look at the checklist. Read the statements in the 'Do I...' column. Answer 'yes', 'no' or 'sometimes'. Mark your answer in the column.
2. Use the checklist here to test the strength of your contribution to your colleagues' **IGL00**. If you answer yes to these questions, you help your colleague build a strong **IGL00**. If you answer 'sometimes' or 'no' think about whether they might like your help.
3. What else could you do to help? If you answer 'sometimes' or 'no' what could you do to make this part of their **IGL00** stronger? It may be something you need to do, you need someone else to help you do, or you need to ask for.
4. How do you make this happen? Think about what you can do to make this happen. Need help and advice? Ask friends and family, colleagues, Line manager, GP, Human Resources, Occupational Health, charities/ support groups, union reps

### Remember...

For many people, working during the Covid-19 outbreak is not easy, but having support can make a huge difference.

If you are not sure what your colleague would find helpful, ask them. Talk through the checklist with them and identify some concrete actions that you can take to help them build their **IGL00**.

Resources	Location	Do I...?	Do I... Yes, No, Sometimes	I need to... If you answered "sometimes" or "no", what else would be helpful?	I can make this happen by... Need help and advice? Ask friends and family, Human Resources, Occupational Health, colleagues, charity/support groups, union reps;
Individual	Work	Help my colleagues create structure in the working day – e.g. divide up tasks into smaller components?			
		Help my colleagues identify work priorities – what must be done today, what can wait?			
	Home	Encourage my colleagues to prioritise self-care?			
		Ensure my colleagues have clear boundaries between work and leisure?			
Group	Work	Provide feedback on tasks to build confidence?			
		Help out when colleagues are doing challenging tasks?			
		Maintain social and informal contact with colleagues?			
Leader	Work	See that my line manager: Ensures the team has the necessary equipment to do Communicates work demands e.g. workload, prioritises job tasks?			
		Gives control over the way the work is done?			
		Provides emotional and practical support?			
		Promotes positive working relationships in the team?			
		Communicates the organisation's response to Covid-19?			
		Explores work adjustments where appropriate e.g. working hours, review of job tasks?			
		Is available to employees but not intrusive?			
		Agrees what information about the employee's current situation is communicated to colleagues?			
Organisational	Work	Work in a safe work environment?			
		Know what the policies are for flexible working?			
		Know if our organisation provides work-focused counselling, and if so, do I know how to access it?			
		Support a culture where mental health and physical health are prioritised?			

*NB. While you can't influence the support employees receive outside of work, if you know that the employee is experiencing difficulties outside work, this could make the group support in work, or access to an EAP service, even more important for them.*

## Where to go for further information

### Mental health

**Every Mind Matters**

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters)

**Mind**

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

**Mental Health Foundation**

[www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

**Time to talk**

[take-time-to-talk.com](http://take-time-to-talk.com)

### Professional bodies

**CIPD** (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

[www.cipd.co.uk](http://www.cipd.co.uk)

**IOSH** (Institution of Occupational Safety and Health)

[www.iosh.co.uk](http://www.iosh.co.uk)

**HSE** (Health and Safety Executive)

[www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

**ACAS** (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)

[www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461](http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1461)

**DRC** (Disability Rights Commission)

[www.drc.org.uk](http://www.drc.org.uk)

**SOM** (Society of Occupational Medicine)

[www.som.org.uk](http://www.som.org.uk)

### Managing mental health at work:

<https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/toolkit/coronavirus-and-isolation-supporting-yourself-and-your-colleagues/>

## Biographies

**Professor Karina Nielsen** is Director of the Institute of Work Psychology, University of Sheffield. Her research focuses on the design, implementation and evaluation of organizational interventions in the field of organizational health.



**Dr Joanna Yarker** is Director of Affinity Health at Work, a workplace wellbeing consultancy. Her work uses evidence based approaches to improve health and wellbeing at work for employees, teams, managers and organisations.



## About these Guidelines

*These guidelines have been developed by a research team from Sheffield University, in partnership with Affinity Health at Work. The guidance has been developed using the latest research to inform our understanding of what works to help people stay safe and productive at work while managing mental ill-health. It builds on research funded by the Productivity Insights Network, a multidisciplinary network funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Supported by a diverse steering group of subject matter experts, practitioners, policy makers, employers and employees who have returned following mental ill-health, the research team followed 38 employees who had returned to work following a period of absence, and 20 line managers who had managed a returning employee. Using thematic analysis, the team identified the resources that employees reported helped them stay and be productive at work. Once the interviews had been analysed the steering group supported the design of the guidelines presented here. This guidance has been updated with reference to research and practice in the areas of the prevention and rehabilitation.*



The University Of Sheffield.



productivity insights network

