

Mental health strategies : SESSION 1

Three conversations leaders are having today

- Salary reduction
- Breaking layoff news
- Sustaining the morale of the rest of the employees

How to prepare

Managers of organisations will feel extreme anxiety, guilt and fear about how their employees will react. For this purpose one can:

- Acknowledge the discomfort-"I am feeling sad that I have to do this"
- Go past these feelings — simple breathing techniques are helpful
- Be as calm as possible so as to not stumble upon your own words

Having the conversation

- Practice compassion
- Connect at a human level
- Make eye contact
- Be direct with the communication
- Acknowledge the contributions of the employee
- Come up with a plan of how the conversation will go

Concept of guilt or finger pointing at specific groups of employees — blaming HR and other roles that “They are making me do this” during the conversation

- A set of guidelines before the conversation
- If the HR team can support on what needs to be said, you will have a more uniform communication when you have that conversation
- Being mindful that you are the representative of the organisation
- Be the leader on behalf of the leadership

What is it that organisations can do to build a safety net

First and foremost, the manager must understand the economic and mental health impacts and create a safe space by recognising the mental health needs of all employees

- Practice empathy
- A guide for “duty of care at work place”
- The ability to spot when somebody is not feeling fine
- Training a few key people in the organisation in the HR team
- Employee assistance program (helpline)

Culture of psychological safety

- Training for Psychological First Aid
- Learning to recognise emotional issues and provide support
- Sustained support : Counselors on call (create tie ups with mental health organisations)
- General sensitisation on the concept of mental health at the work place
- Leadership to take ownership of their employees’ emotions

How do you communicate to employees when you know they can be infected, they are at risk

- If you are working alongside they will feel comfortable
- Proof of concept - “I am ask exposed to this as you are”
- You are their shoulder
- Communicate your support
- Taking strict measures

How do you deal with suicidal ideation in the work environment

- The moment you have information about someone having suicidal ideation, confidentiality can be broke and reported: to family members or a psychologist
- You would be required to respond to this immediately and get immediate assistance
- Keep in mind the sensitivity of the situation
- Get your HR team to follow through
- Keep a colleague as a buddy to keep a watchful eye on the individual