

Managing Through COVID-19:

Tips for Small Business Owners to Support Their Employees

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to provide employers and business owners with many challenges. Some workplaces are needing to drastically adapt the way they do business, while others have had to close temporarily. Even though times have been challenging, there are actions that you can take to support the well-being of your employees, and your business.



Small business owners in Ottawa have experienced great deals of stress throughout this pandemic – between announcements and short timelines to implement changes to still needing to support their families throughout these challenging times. Small business owners have also proven to be very flexible and resilient. Below are some practical suggestions to help business owners continue to adapt and support their employees through this situation.

- 1. Keep your employees informed about new and upcoming changes as much as possible** – When people are informed of what changes are coming and how things are being addressed, they are better able to cope with the change.
- 2. Communicate openly and honestly about the potential for job loss and any plans in place to support your employees** – If there is potential job loss in your business, transparency is essential to protect the psychological well-being of your staff. People need to know what changes to expect if they are going to be able to develop a plan to manage them.
- 3. Inform your employees about the assistance available to support them from the Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments** – People will feel supported when they know that there are resources available to them to help them get through this difficult time.
- 4. Acknowledge the value of the work that your employees have already contributed to the organization** – Demonstrate the value that your employees have contributed to your organization. For example, let them know that the work they have done has benefited their local community, or your organization, or whatever the appropriate example is for your workplace.
- 5. Acknowledge the many emotions your employees will be experiencing**
This is not a normal time, and it is very normal for people to be experiencing anxiety and many different emotions at this time. It is important to acknowledge that and to know that you are not alone.

6. Ensure that your employees know how to access mental health support –

This is a challenging time for many people, especially those that must worry about their financial security. Make sure that you know about the supports and resources available (see below).



Remember, it's ok to not be ok.

Asking for help is not a sign of weakness but rather a sign of courage. In fact, seeking support when you need it will benefit all aspects of your life including both your physical and mental health.

If you need support please call the **Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region** at 613-238-3311 for services in English or French or **Tel-Aide Outaouais** at 613-741-6433 for services in French. These phone lines are your connection to mental health support and resources 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Counselling Connect provides quick access to free phone or video counselling sessions. This service is for children, youth, adults and families in Ottawa and the surrounding area.

The **Walk-in Counselling Clinic** at 755-2277 offers free counselling sessions in English, French, Arabic, Spanish, Somali, Cantonese and Mandarin.

AccessMHA makes it easy to find mental health and/or substance use support, services, and care. We work with you to refer you to the services you need from a network of partner organizations, all while supporting you through the process.

For more information and resources visit OttawaPublicHealth.ca/COVIDMentalHealth.

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