



Working From Home (WFH) and Our Well-Being

The COVID-19 Circuit Breaker measures have resulted in more restrictions for us in Singapore. Working from Home (WFH) has become the new norm. Telecommuting, however, is not a new phenomenon for many. With the advancement of technology in recent years, it has proven to be a convenient and effective mode of communication for work and socialising.

Yet, there are also several disadvantages identified by research. Social connection and work relationships are important aspects of employees' well-being and these influence productivity. Also, research indicates that poor social connection generally leads to low self-esteem and loneliness. There is evidence suggesting that loneliness and isolation not only increase physical health problems, they also impact mental health through depression, stress, and a lower quality of life.

Below are three tips that individuals who are working from home can consider to maintain their connection with their colleagues and friends:

1. Hold regular meetings via online video platform.

Utilise the advancement of technology to hold online video meeting while working away from office. This can provide regular updates to everyone and keep everyone on the same page. While emails are good, face-to-face video meetings are better! Seeing someone smiling in a video meeting connects way better than a smiley on an email.

2. Have a buddy to connect with.

Consider a buddy-rotation system (e.g., a buddy a week), where you get to check in with a colleague (via text or a call) on his or her coping, adjustment, and struggles with the new work arrangements. Through this, you may even forge deeper relationships with colleagues whom you might not have the opportunity to connect with if you were in the office.

3. Schedule a personal phone call to catch up with a close colleague.

For many, lunchtime is a time to catch up with close colleagues. However, when working away from the office, break and lunch times may not always coincide.



It can be helpful to schedule a specific time to call and catch up with one another, to chat, and to share your day.

Research has also shown that it is not uncommon for individuals to be interrupted by home demands during work hours. In fact, research further shows that individuals are interrupted from their home activities to deal with work demands after work hours! Some individuals may find it difficult to 'knock off' if they are working from home, resulting in overworking and burnout.

Some useful strategies to consider:

Set Goals

Be specific about the goals that you set and ensure that they are achievable within a given time.

Be Accountable

Talk to someone about your goals and keep each other accountable with a timeline.

Reward Self

Make plans to reward yourself (e.g., take short breaks) when you reach certain milestones throughout the day.

Have Clear Physical Boundaries

It is healthy to designate a work space that is separate from your rest, leisure or dining area, where possible. It can be easier to unplug yourself from your work with clear physical boundaries.

Set Work Hours

Work according to the hours you would work in the office. Not only does this help you to distinguish work and home hours, it will be easier to adjust when you return back to office.

Protect Work/Home Hours

Negotiate with family members and employers regarding the work/home hours being protected.

Have Clear Communication



It is important for employers/managers and employees to have open communication about expectations and boundaries. These conversations can reduce potential disruption and ensure work does not bleed into personal life.

Furthermore, it can be helpful to make daily plans which include a balance of self-care, productivity, and leisure.

Self-care refers to physical care (e.g., sleep routine, hygiene, food, exercise) and emotional care (e.g., keep a reflective journal, chat with a friend).

Productivity refers not only to doing work, it can also be a process of 'sharpening your tools' and exploring new ways to be more efficient in carrying out your work.

Leisure refers to a variety of activities that you can engage with within the indoor space that can reduce boredom. This includes having hobbies, playing games, or watching shows.

In difficult times where every family member is together for many hours a day, we encourage acknowledgement that there may be moments of joy and sharing coupled with moments of hurt and anger. It is important to know that this is not something unique to you and you are not alone.

If you like to seek a psychologist to further discuss about stress management and other issues that may arise from your WFH arrangements, the Singapore Psychological Society encourages you to refer to the directory of registered psychologists: <https://singaporepsychologicalsociety.org/srp-membership-directory/>.

The Singapore Register of Psychologists (SRP) seeks to protect the welfare of the users of psychological services and to maintain and advance the professional standards of psychologists (i.e., Registered Psychologists are bound by SPS Code of Ethics and are required to maintain their registration through professional development and rigorous standards similar to international standards). The public can be assured of the accountability and professionalism of the Registered Psychologists found on our list.