



▶ Let's talk **openly** about mental health in the workplace

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Teleworking has become the new normal. It has brought new stresses on workers, as they find themselves isolated or juggling family and professional responsibilities and experiencing blurred lines between their work life and personal life, while working from home.

Frontline workers, such as health care and emergency workers but also those involved in the production of essential goods, in delivery and transportation, or in ensuring the security and safety of the population, are also facing many stressful situations as a result of the pandemic.

Many are worried about losing their jobs. Mass layoffs are affecting all sectors of the economy. With unemployment at the highest level since the Great Depression it's no wonder we all feel uncertain about the future.



Faced with this incredible level of uncertainty, workers may experience mood swings, low motivation, exhaustion, anxiety, depression, burnout and even suicidal thoughts. A range of physical reactions can also occur, such as digestive problems, changes to appetite and weight, dermatological reactions, fatigue, cardio-vascular disease, musculoskeletal disorders, headaches or other unexplained aches and pains. It can also lead to an increased use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs as a way of coping. If not appropriately assessed and managed, these psychosocial risks can trigger or deepen distress and turn into real mental health problems.

## Managing work-related psychosocial risks during the COVID-19 pandemic

It contains ten areas for action in the workplace, both in times of lockdown and during the return to work.

①Environment and equipment ②Workload, work-pace and work-schedule ③Violence and harassment ④Work-life balance  
⑤Job security ⑥Management leadership ⑦Communication, information and training ⑧Health promotion and prevention of negative coping behaviours ⑨Social support ⑩Psychological support

The guide includes advice on how to organize the physical environment in the workplace, including layout and points of exposure to hazardous agents; how to assess the workload and work assignments in the specific context of COVID-19; how to deal with violence and harassment; and how strong and effective leadership can have a positive impact on employees.

It also tells workers how to protect themselves from unfair dismissal in situations where they refuse to work for fear that their life or health could be endangered.

[https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/resources-library/publications/WCMS\\_748638/lang--ja/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/safety-and-health-at-work/resources-library/publications/WCMS_748638/lang--ja/index.htm)

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