

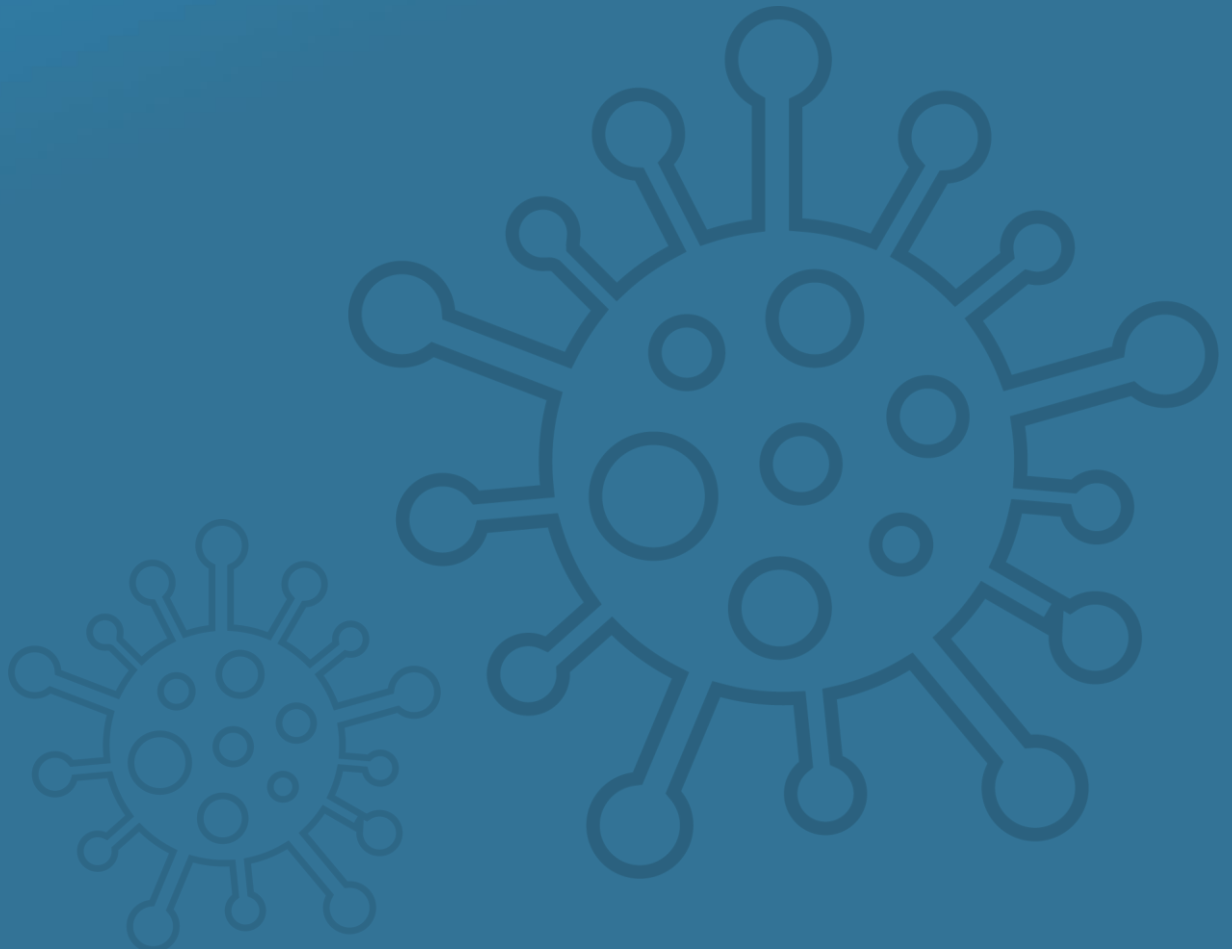


Fáilte Ireland

National Tourism Development Authority

TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS ON STAYING CONNECTED WITH EMPLOYEES

Connect | Support | Reassure | Empathise | Motivate





INTRODUCTION

As employers our role is to lead, guide, motivate and support our employees so that as a team, we can collectively lean on each other and care for our customers.

During the Covid-19 crisis, many tourism business employers find themselves in the sudden position of having to deliver bad news to their valued team members including temporary redundancies and curtailed working hours. Within a rapid and unexpected timeframe, employers have had to manage a vast range of complex issues from human resource management, to closures, to contractual obligations and customer care.





Understandably, many employers are exhausted and are dealing with how best to continue leading and motivating in a complex setting for their employees who may be:

- Temporarily not working
- On a curtailed working week
- Or working full-time from home, but feeling overwhelmed by the sudden reality of having to balance their work with other responsibilities including childcare, or supporting elderly relatives.



SO, LET'S TAKE STOCK AND REMEMBER WHO WE ARE AS EMPLOYERS IN THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

- Our experience has made us solution driven people who are highly skilled at working with our teams to resolve all kinds of issues - the big and the small
- We are **experts** in human behaviour. Because of the nature of tourism businesses, we are placed at the very heart of the highs and lows of life on a daily basis
- In fact, we are the leaders who have an evidence-based track record in supporting and helping our customers and our teams through good times and bad
- This is exactly the experience and skills employers need to draw upon to motivate and guide our employees during these challenging times.





SO, HOW CAN THE EMPLOYER MOVE FORWARD?

This is a new temporary reality and we are all learning as we move through it. Understand that all people, including employees, are looking for understanding, regular communication and leadership as the crisis unfolds.

The reality is that, as employees are being asked to stay at home and to physically disconnect due to Covid-19, the desire to stay connected through offline and online communications has never been stronger.

REMEMBER!

All of our behaviours and all of our responses during the current climate will be forever remembered and appreciated during the recovery.

Effective management of our employees now will mean that we can engage in the recovery as quickly and as effectively as possible.



TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS ON STAYING CONNECTED WITH EMPLOYEES

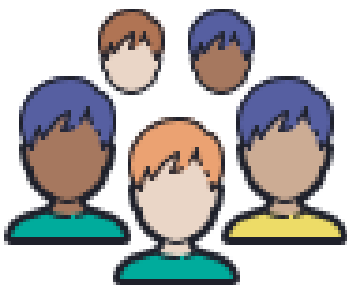
These are unprecedented times, so understand that it is acceptable for you as a leader to admit that you are also finding the situation challenging. As leaders, we need to treat our employees with kindness and absolute humanity.

And during this crisis, employees will appreciate that the employer shows their humanity too.

At all times, remember that as employers, our communications with employees need to be:

- Empathetic
- Supportive
- Realistic
- Encouraging
- Clear
- Human

Next you will see some tips and solutions for keeping connected with your valued employees.





HOW TO STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES?

- Consider accessing virtual chat forums. Schedule a weekly call that brings together individual employees, or a group of team members
- For employees who are less digitally savvy, reach out via weekly check-in calls to see how they are doing
- Organise a buddy system or a group system whereby buddies or people within the groups check in with each other
- Send out regular updates by email or post on what is happening within your business or the industry that keep employees connected, updated and engaged:
 - Make sure to include good news stories
 - Available supports and
 - Fun activities
- Generate some fun ideas for virtual events by asking employees to come up with initiatives to keep people connected e.g. video chat virtual Coffee mornings, virtual book clubs and just opportunities to **CONNECT**. Make a note of good suggestions and also consider promoting these via online platforms to lift the tourism industry and your customers who are all seeking goods news stories at this time
- Encourage employees to think about what they have to give. Each person has so much to offer and so many unique talents that they can share with others. Ask employees to think about what they can do to help someone who may be vulnerable at this time and need an extra bit of help.



WELLBEING TIPS

In this current climate, we are being asked to accept behaviours that are unnatural to human beings through physical and social distancing. In your conversations with employees, you could consider suggesting the following:

Set Limits on News and Social Media and only use technology to stay connected and informed using trustworthy and reliable sources of news and information.

Stay Connected as friends and family are a good source of support so stay in regular contact through text, voice calls, video calls, emails and social media.

Stick to a Routine and make sure you are going to sleep and waking up at the same time as usual. Shower and dress every morning as usual and make sure you eat at regular times.

Keep Moving and try not to spend all day sitting. Getting exercise helps your mind and your body to release tension and stress and will give you more energy and a more positive state of mind. Go for a walk, run or cycle outside remembering to keep social distancing in place.

Find Ways to Relax by doing some of the things that make you feel good.

Stay Healthy by exercising regularly, eating a healthy balanced diet, getting enough sleep and avoiding excess alcohol.

Try Something New and fun by reading a new book, checking out some online exercise, learning a new skill online or catching up with someone you haven't spoken to in a while.

Think Innovatively for example, there are many fun activities that are available for no or low cost online during the crisis. Could your business consider engaging the services of an online class (yoga, or cookery for example) that your employees could collectively engage in?

Information and support for employees

- Stay Connected – remind yourself this is an unprecedented situation that we all find ourselves in, so it is natural to feel worried and stressed. Make to stay connected, reach out to others in the work place as well your family and friends. Have open and honest conversations and know that we are all in this together. This will pass.
- If you are not feeling well and have symptoms of Covid-19 please contact your GP or phone the HSE Live 1850 24 1850.
- If you have concerns about your mental health you can discuss this with your GP, a counselling service if available through your health provider by speaking with someone in the Samaritans on 116 123.
- The World Health Organization has launched a messaging service to provide the latest news and information on coronavirus including details on symptoms and how people can protect themselves and others. Find out more about this service [here](#).

