



## WORKPLACE OPTIONS' PREPAREDNESS FOR COVID-19

April 30, 2020

---

Call volumes to our service centers have seen a slow but steady increase this week, confirming our own predictions that as people begin to see some light at the end of the tunnel, their minds would begin to turn to pre-existing issues and difficulties that have been masked by the long and difficult adjustment to lockdown conditions everywhere in the world. Our teams have been able to stay ahead of this shift in demand, ensuring that callers are supported quickly, with minimum delays and well within our operating service standards.

As several countries around the world begin to set schedules for the return from lockdown, WPO's business continuity team and senior leadership have started to set plans for how we want to navigate through this challenging and complex phase of the pandemic. We have always viewed the adjustment to lockdown and to post-lockdown as a marathon and not a sprint, and our most important priority as we plan our return is to ensure our staff always feel safe. As countries implement different phased return programs, we will ensure that our respective offices and service centers will comply with local directions, but we are clear that we will not implement any hasty return. And so, we foresee that the total transition period, once we begin the process, is likely to take a few months. An important element of this planning will be to ensure that we have the capability and process in place to return to full business continuity in the unfortunate event that lockdown conditions are re-imposed further down the line.

Next week, will see the start of several innovations that we have been working on. The first of these will be the launch of two virtual support groups, focusing on the family members of health workers and on the management of feelings of anxiety during the COVID crisis. These initial four-week programs will be in the English language, and our clinical leadership are currently working with our senior clinical staff worldwide to schedule virtual groups in additional languages.

Over the last few weeks, we have scheduled 138 mindfulness sessions with over 30,000 participants around the world joining our coaches to learn simple techniques of mindfulness to help them cope with the pressures and challenges of lockdown and social isolation. Following the resounding success of these live sessions and in response to overwhelming demand for pre-recorded versions of these, we have now created a dedicated online mindfulness channel. This will offer your employees and family members a range of different pre-

CONTINUED

---

The mindfulness channel will launch in the next week, and clients will be notified about the access arrangements as usual through our twice-weekly program of COVID-19 communications.

recorded audio mindfulness exercises in multiple languages which they can access at any time and as often as they like. The mindfulness channel will launch in the next week, and clients will be notified about the access arrangements as usual through our twice-weekly program of COVID-19 communications.

Our recorded webinars in the last three weeks continue to attract a great deal of interest with an average so far of 2,000 views for each. Last week's focused on the families of health workers, and this week we released our latest, Coping with Social Isolation. The prospect of solitary confinement and isolation can be daunting and for many people, and the concept of limited social connection can be overwhelming. The webinar equips attendees with the knowledge and strategies to cope during this time and find new ways to form a connection with others in a virtual world. There will be other new webinar releases in the coming weeks, as well new content as we turn our attention to support for millennials and to the adjustment challenges of a gradual exit from lockdown.

We also launched our public COVID-19 resource center on our workplaceoptions.com site. Here, our clients and individuals can learn more about the proactive steps and measures that Workplace Options has taken to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we have provided access to practical and timely resources for individuals and their family members to stay safe and well.

Finally, you will soon receive an invite to a targeted online panel discussion for our client and member HR leads focused on understanding and supporting the post-lockdown workplace. It is clear that our employees will be returning to a new office environment impacted by their own experiences and expectations of home work during the lockdown, as well as by the realities of continued social distancing—temperature checks, face masks, and altered work schedules. The panelists are all HR directors in China, and they will share their unique experiences in guiding their employees back to the workplace.

We continue to communicate with all our clients several times each week, and we hear that these communications are well received. Your feedback, through our hardworking account management teams, strengthens our resolves and enables us to continuously improve what we are doing to support 60 million employees worldwide.

As always, we wish you and your loved ones the very best of health.