

THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER IN DISARMING CORONA VIRUS COVID-19 AT WORK

ISSUED: MARCH 2020



FOCUS ON SICK ABSENCE

The Corona Virus poses a risk to the health and wellbeing of individuals, society and business. It is extremely important for line managers to be vigilant and to implement protocols, apply resources and use programmes that are geared to prevent and respond to a possible outbreak in our workplace.

Workplace Absence Management [WAM]

is a pivotal risk mitigation programme.

The Toolkit

Line Managers and HR are in a good position to educate, guide, reassure and refer people for support.

The Central Office Sustainability department has issued best practice health risk mitigation protocols that include practical guidelines, educational resources, hygiene practices, clinical surveillance and response.

The LifeAssist WAM Handbook provides guidelines for managing Sick Absence that cover manager consultation, sick note verification and health coaching.

The LifeAssist EWP provides psycho-social counselling and wellness advice that can support people to deal with concerns or to proactively improve their health and wellbeing.



The Role of the Line Manager

- ① **EDUCATE YOUR PEOPLE** about the virus by displaying posters, allowing them to attend info/briefing sessions and by distributing company-approved messages and education materials.
- ② **HOLD YOUR PEOPLE ACCOUNTABLE** for complying with company protocols, particularly preventative hygiene – e.g. hand washing/sanitizing and cough-sneeze etiquette). Make sure that there are sufficient consumables for this purpose.
- ③ **DISCOURAGE 'HEARSAY'** by introducing people to WAM Health Coaching, SHE Representatives, Medicare (if contracted to your site) or your local healthcare provider health lines, for credible health information, advice and counselling.
- ④ **INITIATE REFERRAL** to the EWP if you suspect that someone is not coping (in any area of their life). Relentless **Stress** can weaken the immune system and make a person more susceptible to infection or progression.
Anxiety is real, but it is not helpful. If someone is worried about the wellbeing of a loved one, or the risk of contracting a potentially life-threatening illness in the workplace; or if the anxiety is playing out as stigma, or affecting performance or attendance, refer them to LifeAssist for counselling.
- ⑤ LifeAssist provides professional guidance through the Manager Consultation service.
CONTACT A WAM HEALTH COACH or EWP Case Manager for advice during normal business hours.

6 REFER AN EMPLOYEE TO WAM when you become aware of any of the following:
(irrespective of association with COVID-19):

- Diagnosis of COVID-19
- Isolation/quarantine (self or mandatory) due to known or suspected COVID-19
- Report of diagnosis of a close contact
- Admission to hospital
- Diagnosis of chronic illness
- > 5 consecutive days Sick Leave
- Disciplinary process that relates to sick absence
- Exhausted Sick Leave
- Frequent Sick Leave
- Health-related issue
- Lifestyle concern (substance use, sleep, smoking, exercise, diet)
- Psychological state (stress, anxiety, recent trauma, PTSD)
- Organisational issue (burnout, conflict, stress, workoverload)
- Disability (early identification)
- Suspicion about Sick Leave abuse/improbable excuses
- Patterns of behaviour /symptoms

7 LifeAssist can **refer a person to the relevant healthcare provider for case management (preventative or supportive)**, if it comes to light that an employee is immune compromised – i.e. HIV, TB, Cancer, Pregnancy, known chronic illness, PTSD, on cortisone medication etc.

8 SICK NOTE VERIFICATION: As COVID-19 is a new virus, the patterns on sick absence are yet to be established, hence, it will be prudent to refer all sick notes to WAM to verify and collate. Indirectly, you will be contributing to research in this regard.

Self-isolation due to suspected exposure or a mandated incubation period is tricky to manage, and it is a prime opportunity for a WAM Health Coach to reach the individual at home to offer support and establish the prognosis.



To get the best value from this professional service, a WAM Manager Referral Form should accompany the submission of the medical certificate.

MANAGER REFERRAL PROCESS



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

www.yourlifeassist.co.za/sunint

Speak to a WAM Health Coach

Weekdays 08:00 – 17:00

CALL 0860 111 322

wam@lifeassist.co.za