The impact of isolation on employee health and wellness

Today’s Topics:

1. Latest on COVID-19

2. Employee mental health and feelings of loneliness

3. Increased substance use and abuse

1.21.21
The impact of isolation on employee health and wellness

Ed Gilkey, MD, MS, MBA, CPE, Senior Physician Executive, Northern Light Beacon Health

Jim Jarvis, MD, FAAFP Senior Physician Executive Incident Command, Northern Light Health, Director, Clinical Education, Northern Light EMMC

Angela Fileccia, LCSW, Director Healthy Life Resource Program, Northern Light Acadia

Jacquelyn Cyr, NPC, Adult Outpatient Services, Northern Light Acadia Hospital
Legal Disclosure:

The Coronavirus pandemic is an ongoing, continuously evolving situation. Northern Light Health encourages everyone to follow federal and state governmental guidance and mandates.

Northern Light Health does not know the particulars of your situation, so the information presented today is general in nature and is based upon Northern Light Health’s own experience, which may or may not apply in your specific situation, and which may be revised as we learn more about the Coronavirus.

Accordingly, following any guidance Northern Light Health presents today in no way guarantees that you, your employees and/or your customers and clients will not contract or spread the Coronavirus.
Ask us questions – give us feedback – this hour is for you

- Please use the chat function to ask your questions at anytime.
The latest on COVID-19
## COVID-19 Latest Numbers

### Cases overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Total cases</th>
<th>Recovered</th>
<th>Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maine</strong></td>
<td>34,963</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>United States</strong></td>
<td>24.5M</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>406K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Worldwide</strong></td>
<td>96.2M</td>
<td>53.1M</td>
<td>2.06M</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why wait to be retested?

• May continue to test positive for up to 90 days
• Well after symptoms have subsided and are no longer contagious
COVID-19 Vaccination Update

What You Need to Know

Northern Light Health, with direction of the Maine State CDC, has expanded COVID-19 vaccination offerings to community members age 75 and over. At this time, vaccine supply is very limited and you must have an appointment to get vaccinated.

- If you are 75 or over, make an appointment for your vaccine at covid.northernlighthouse.org/publicvaccine.

- All Northern Light Health locations offering the vaccine in Maine are listed on this site.

- New appointments are added every week on Monday, as soon as we confirm the number of vaccine doses we have.

- While we cannot register patients by phone at this time, we are working hard now to set up a call center in the near future — watch for that information soon.

- For ongoing information about the COVID-19 vaccine, please call our recorded vaccination information line at 207.279.1220.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work to get our communities vaccinated.
Thriving in the unknown: Employee mental health and feelings of loneliness
What makes this so hard?

Loneliness – The next pandemic?

- Quarantine
- “Social” distancing
- Masking
- Virtual world
- Community events cancelled

The Big Idea: Social isolation from the pandemic could trigger loneliness.
Loneliness Defined

• The perception of being alone and isolated.
• A feeling of disconnectedness or isolation.
• The feeling of being alone, regardless of how many people are around.

Loneliness vs. Alone

• Alone is not the same as lonely.
• An individual’s level of satisfaction with their connection with others.
• Perception is reality.

The Big Idea:
Loneliness and being alone are not the same.
Loneliness: The next pandemic?

Loneliness by the numbers

- Rates of loneliness have doubled since 1980s
- More than 25% of Americans live alone; highest percentage ever recorded!
- A third of Americans reported feeling lonely
- In 2018, the UK appointed a Minister of Loneliness.
- Older adults at greatest risk for loneliness.
- Surveys during Covid indicate increased feelings of loneliness at the start of the pandemic.

The Big Idea:
The loneliness pandemic started before Covid.
Loneliness and Covid

The Big Idea: Loneliness is a real problem for many.

Pandemic Isolation
- Studies conducted in 2020 show increase in depression, anxiety, and feelings of loneliness.
- Older adults, people of color, low income, those in congregate living all at greater risk.
- Fear, limited ability to read facial expressions, casual interactions even gone.

The Virtual World
- “Social” Distancing
  - In-person events cancelled
  - Virtual world harder to connect
  - Limits type of human interactions
- Work from home
  - Abnormal WFH conditions
  - Work friendships harder to maintain

The impact of isolation on employee health and wellness
Ways to help

**Physical distancing, not social**
- Maintain connection with friends & family
- Call, not just text!

**Embrace virtual**
- Learn & use tech: Facetime, Google Meets, Zoom, WebEx, etc.
- Cameras on!

**Be Purposeful**
- Schedule virtual happy hours, trivia/game nights
- Host staff meetings with cameras on
- Create & schedule time for chit-chat and check-ins

---

The Big Idea:
Loneliness risk can be decreased.
Increased substance use and abuse
Increased Substance Use and Abuse

Most commonly used substances:

- Alcohol (88%)
- Marijuana (37%)
- Prescription opioids (15%)
- Benzodiazepines, such as Xanax (11%)
- Prescription stimulants, such as Adderall (10%)
- Cocaine (9%)

Reasons given for increased use:

- 53% cope with stress
- 39% relieve boredom
- 32% cope with mental health symptoms, such as anxiety or depression
- recreational reasons, to treat pain or part of daily routine
Increase Substance use and abuse

The 5 W’s

- What are you drinking and How Much?
- When are you drinking?
- Where?
- Who are you drinking with?
- Why?

The 6th W - is this or should this pattern be a Worry?

Ask yourself to HALT and find your WHY

- H = Are you Hungry/Hangry
- A = Anxious or Angry
- L = Lonely or Lazy(bored)
- T = Tired or Thirsty
Increased Substance Use and Abuse

Criteria for Substance Abuse Disorders

- Cravings to use the substance
- Wanting to cut down or stop but not managing to
- Taking the substance in larger amounts or for longer than you’re meant to
- Neglecting other parts of your life because of substance use
- Continuing to use, even when it causes problems in relationships
- Using substances even when it puts you in danger
Increased Substance use and abuse

Things to watch for when substances maybe an issue:

- Increased absences/disappearing unexpectedly
- Declining Job performance
- Evident Financial struggle
- Regular physical Health Issues
- Decline in personal hygiene and appearance
- Frequently Erratic and Unpredictable behavior
Resources for Substance Abuse

Additional Resources:

- 207.949.4634 Northern Light Acadia Hospital
Tools you can use:

https://northernlighthealth.org/Resources/Safe-Return-to-Business
For more information or to submit a topic for a future Zoom Conference:

Contact:
Lanie Abbott
Director of Communications
lwabbott@northernlight.org
Join us Thursday, February 4:

Handling Employee Exposures and Planning for Mass Vaccinations
Legal Disclosure:

The Coronavirus pandemic is an ongoing, continuously evolving situation. Northern Light Health (NLH) encourages everyone to follow federal and state governmental guidance and mandates.

NLH does not know the particulars of your situation, so the information presented today is general in nature and is based upon NLH’s own experience, which may or may not apply in your specific situation, and which may be revised as we learn more about the Coronavirus.

Accordingly, following any guidance NLH presents today in no way guarantees that you, your employees and/or your customers and clients will not contract or spread the Coronavirus.