Is Long Covid Impacting the Mental Health of Business Teams? Psychological Symptoms for Managers

Although most of us are aware of the physical problems COVID brings, physiological symptoms may also affect the mental health of individuals in the workplace.

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Workplace Mental Health

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, November 15, 2022 / EINPresswire.com/ -- According to the Office for National Statistics, almost two million people in the UK have experienced prolonged complications from Covid. The World Health Organisation has confirmed that more than 200 symptoms have been reported by people with long Covid, also known as 'post-Covid syndrome'.

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Recent data found that the prevalence of long COVID was common in people 35–69 years. It also found that females, people living in low-income areas, and those with a health condition or disability that limits their ability to exercise were also more likely to report having symptoms of long COVID.

Experts worldwide are actively studying this topic to learn more about the long-term effects, who are at significant risk, and how these symptoms can be treated. One of the leading experts on this syndrome is UK mental health expert and Onebright consultant Professor Marcantonio Spada. Below, Spada shares with employers, managers and team leaders the psychological signs that an individual may display in the workplace and offers expert mental health advice on providing support and compassion during these challenges.

As more research and data come to light, we will understand why these symptoms present themselves and how managers can spot the signs for early treatment.

What is long Covid?

While many people who catch COVID-19 fully recover, some people will find they develop a

variety of mid and long-term effects of the virus. Physical symptoms like fatigue and breathlessness are some common symptoms cited, alongside cognitive dysfunction; for example, confusion, forgetfulness, or a lack of mental focus and clarity. Some people will also experience some form of psychological effect as part of their post-COVID condition.

Symptoms might persist from their initial illness or develop after recovery from COVID. Surprisingly, it is also possible for symptoms to come and go or relapse over time. Post-COVID conditions can affect a person's ability to perform daily activities such as returning to work, family responsibilities and everyday life.

Professor Marcantonio Spada, a Cognitive Behavioural Therapy practitioner at Onebright, said:

"The unpredictability of long Covid will impact its sufferers in many ways, for example, preventing socialising and working, and not knowing how long the condition will endure.

This, in turn, is likely to fuel psychological distress.

Research has indicated that up to a third of people may suffer anxiety and/or mood disorders six months after their initial COVID-19 infection."

What are the Psychological aspects of post-COVID conditions?
Some post-COVID symptoms are in the mental health area. These include:

Anxiety
Depression or other mood changes
Concentration or memory problems ('brain fog')
Sleep disturbance

The fact that no definitive treatments exist to address long COVID can leave individuals and their families feeling extremely frustrated. Some feel their symptoms are dismissed or minimized by their providers, families, or workplace, leaving them feeling alone and dissatisfied with mental health care.

Also, some individuals can feel dismissed when people don't believe their symptoms or when complex mental health concerns are attributed only to anxiety.

Professor Spada said this was likely to become an issue that spills over into the workplace and will affect [workplace mental health](#):

"As evidence mounts on the growing mental health impact that the pandemic has had on individuals, an invisible pandemic continues to spill over into the workplace; one that requires more than simply raising awareness or approving an extended holiday break for an employee,"

he said.

"Anxiety and low mood have always been part of working life, but the COVID-19 pandemic has propelled these into the limelight."

Professor Spada shared four tips on how to boost your mental health if you are struggling post-Covid.

Be kind during the recovery process

Be prepared that some days will be worse than others. There may be "windows" of improvement followed by more difficult times. These ups and downs are part of the recovery process.

Connect with other people.

This can help increase feelings of happiness and offer a distraction from both physical and psychological symptoms of long Covid, so make sure to keep in touch regularly with family and friends.

Have a daily routine.

This will help improve mood and sense of stability.

Stay active.

Continuing to move will help release endorphins and take attention away from monitoring fluctuating physical and psychological symptoms. It will also help with strengthening baseline fitness to improve confidence.

How can employers support those with long COVID?
Employers should also be aware that the effects of long COVID can come and go. On some days, the person might seem well, but on others, their symptoms can be worse, and they might need to be off work again or have work schedules made more flexible.

Employees needing sick leave for long COVID might feel isolated or need support to return to work. Employers should consider the following ways to provide workplace mental health support:

1. Agree on how and when to make contact during any absence.
2. Ensure their work is covered and shared out appropriately while off.
3. Discuss ways to support them as they return to work where and when possible.
4. Determining if they can do anything to help if an employer feels the employee cannot do their work or is taking a lot of time off. For example, a further occupational health assessment can

determine if more support is needed. Get in touch with Onebright if you need mental health services.

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