



## Fight Workplace Isolation

Socializing is not easy for many people, and working remotely has made it even more challenging for them and for everyone in general. This is the reason isolation in the workplace has become one of the biggest challenges we face as a global society. As a result, companies are continuously studying the subject and developing specific programs to create tools to prevent and counteract workplace isolation.

It is a common assumption that people who work surrounded by people in stores, restaurants, or offices do not experience loneliness or social isolation. But this is a misconception. Even if you go to work every day in an environment where you are surrounded by other people, you may still feel lonely or socially isolated, and this can lead to what we now know as “workplace isolation,” an increasingly common phenomenon in modern society. Workplace isolation refers to the lack of emotional and social connection that we experience in the work environment, despite being surrounded by people. It is important that you take a moment to observe the people around you to determine if they are feeling that way. Pay attention to whether they share or interact with others.

Observation Guide – Social workplace isolation can also manifest through changes in behavior and/or attitude, such as:

- **Social isolation:** if you notice that a coworker has become withdrawn, avoids visual and physical contact, refrains from participating in group conversations, or has a disengaged demeanor.
- **Decreased participation:** If you notice that they are participating less, do not participate or leave before activities end.
- **Work performance:** In addition to the detrimental effects on their emotional well-being, there is also a decrease in their performance and productivity. This symptom is extremely dangerous and must be prevented from getting worse, as it may be a result of experiencing loneliness or isolation.
- **Mood swings:** Listlessness, sadness, apathy, or perhaps irritability may be the result of this feeling.

If you are a manager or supervisor and you identify someone on your team who exhibits these symptoms, you should develop tools to help them. Talk to your human resources professionals. They can help you develop productive strategies that are tailored to your type of business and work environment. We share a few recommendations below:

1. Establish working teams for specific functions and be sure to include this person.
2. Make yourself available to them. Try to establish a frequent communication channel.
3. Ask questions that prompt them to provide answers.
4. Involve them in daily activities.
5. Avoid working remotely 100% of the time.
6. Provide guidance on the appropriate use of technology.
7. Encourage face-to-face meetings.
8. If possible, try to schedule lunchtimes so that several people can be there at the same time.
9. Set an example. Have conversations with each member of your team, create discussion groups, and keep communication open between all members.

Increasingly, managers, supervisors, business owners, and human resource professionals are becoming aware of the risk that can result from even one person experiencing isolation in the workplace. It is necessary to pay attention to each individual and take the right measures as soon as possible.

