Tasks for Managers in Responding to Mental Health Needs during Social Distancing or Quarantine

1) Reduce Stigma:
    a. Let people know it's normal to feel anxiety, depression, loneliness, stress, etc.
    b. Talk about your own experiences and normalize talking about how traumatic it can be or worrisome.
        i. Be honest
            1. Don't pretend that this situation is normal, it's not. Express your difficulties but also what you are doing to help manage the stress and anxiety.
2) Let others talk about their experiences
    a. Allow the team to express their concerns and suggestions
3) This is a world wide "natural disaster"- There are symptoms that are expected and normal in response – similar to an earthquake or hurricane but drawn out.
    a. Short term traumatic stress is experienced by almost everyone.
    b. This is a long term disaster which increase the likelihood of a stress reaction.
        i. Chronic stress responses occur in approximately 9% of people resulting in need for psychological care. Normalize this.
4) Social isolation can be destructive to the human mind. It is a primary risk factor for depression.
    a. Offer opportunities for online social interaction- not all business all the time
    b. Be aware if performance drops that may be a sign that an employee is suffering from traumatic stress or the effects of social isolation
5) Check in often – individually and as a group
6) Manage Fear
    a. Know the facts: Seeking practical, credible information at specific times of the day: Don't watch the news all day everyday, seek out information at regular intervals from trusted sources
        i. World Health Organization
        ii. CDC or other national authority
        iii. Talk about the number of recoveries and the purpose of quarantine, it's helps see the positive in the situation
        iv. Stay informed as to restrictions and regulations from all governments so that you can help your employees navigate their jobs within the parameters of their situation
7) Let people know that if they are ill or a family member gets sick their job is secure.
    a. Be willing to allow time to care for family members as well as themselves if they are ill
    b. Reassurance to all staff will help ease anxiety going forward
8) Encourage employees to help each other/you are a team
    a. Check in with each other
    b. If access to supplies is limited somewhere it might be possible for other employees to have supplies delivered to that coworker
9) Keep your daily routines as much as possible. Having continuity in work and a schedule can help.
    a. Express to staff their purpose in their job and how it is helping their community/government/agencies respond to the situation
    b. Having purpose in their work can help their mental health
    c. Having a schedule helps with the social isolation and the forced time at home.
10) Encourage breaks in the work day

    a. Time for exercise
    b. Time for heading outdoors
    c. Meditation/Yoga
        i. Managers can even introduce stress coping mechanisms such as breathing techniques or a short meditation

11) Know your resources within your company
    a. Do you have a current policy on COVID 19 ?
    b. Do you have a policy within your company on how to respond to a mental health emergency with an employee?
    c. Do you know the mental health support numbers in the areas your employees work?
        i. E.g. suicide hotline in the U.S. – 1-800-273-8255
        ii. There are online therapists in every state

12) Stay connected with your social and family networks via technology.