MIT Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR WorkLife AND WellBeing

SPECIALIZED SUPPORT FOR
COVID-19–Related Crises

- An employee passes away
- Employees are presenting with emotional distress
- A "cluster" of positive test results occurs

1

Department contacts MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing and provides overview of situation

Department Initial Contacts

- Directors
- Associate Deans
- Team Managers
- Team Supervisors
- Human Resources
- Other Leadership

MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing Contact Information

Liz Guttenberg, LCSW
Manager, Employee WellBeing
Phone: 781-640-2592
Email: guttenee@mit.edu

Ronnie Mae Weiss, MSW
Senior Manager, Employee WorkLife and WellBeing
Phone: 617-306-0222
Email: rmweiss@mit.edu

2

MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing reviews support options with Department, develops an Action Plan, and provides triage

Virtual Support Provided by MyLife Services*

- Individual Sessions
- Group Sessions
- Outreach Phone Calls
- Manager Consultations

** MyLife Services is a free, confidential counseling and consultative resource for MIT faculty, staff, postdocs, and household members.*

3

MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing provides Department with a customized Action Plan

Action Plan Includes:

- Recommended Next Steps
- Communications Materials
- Helpful Information and Strategies

4

MyLife Services confirms its support services, and Department shares Communications Materials with employees

Communications Materials Include:

- Email Template
- MyLife Services Counselor Bio and Group Session Description (if applicable)

5

Department uses Helpful Information and Strategies; MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing provides further support and triage if needed

Helpful Information and Strategies Include:

- Curated Articles
- Benefits Checklist
- Employee and Family Support Strategies

Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR
WorkLife AND WellBeing

VIRTUAL SUPPORT PROVIDED BY
MyLife Services
A network of experts for MIT faculty, staff, postdocs & families

Departments may choose one or more of the following support crisis support services provided by Master- and PhD-level clinicians from MyLife Services – a free, confidential resource for MIT faculty, staff, postdocs, and their household members.

Individual Sessions

Employees are always encouraged to contact MyLife Services for individual support sessions. Counseling and stress management consultations can be conducted via phone, video conference, or messaging application.

Group Sessions

Group sessions are useful for building a sense of collective wellbeing and cohesion when employees are physically separated.

MyLife Services can facilitate group support sessions on their HIPAA-compliant virtual platform in either of the two formats below:

- A small, interactive format with up to 20 participants – most effective for processing grief when a loss is anticipated or has already occurred
- A "town hall" format with up to 300 participants – most effective for disseminating information and answering questions related to grief, stress, and anxiety

Outreach Phone Calls

MyLife Services can make outreach phone calls to both employees and their household members who wish to speak with a counselor for individual support.
Please note: The employee's written or oral permission is a prerequisite for this service.

Manager Consultations

MyLife Services can advise managers on how to support their employees' emotional needs during challenging times, while promoting productivity and engagement in dynamic work environments. Consultations can be conducted via phone or video conference.

Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR WorkLife AND WellBeing

Specialized Support Action Plan

MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing Contact Information

Liz Guttenberg, LCSW
Manager, Employee WellBeing
Phone: 781-640-2592
Email: guttenee@mit.edu

Ronnie Mae Weiss, MSW
Senior Manager, Employee WorkLife and WellBeing
Phone: 617-306-0222
Email: rmweiss@mit.edu

Department: <<Insert department>>
Department Primary Contact: <<Insert Name>>
Phone: <<Insert Phone Number>>
Email: <<Insert Email Address>>

SITUATION: <<Insert one-sentence overview of situation>>

Recommended Next Steps:

1. <<Insert recommendation 1>>
2. <<Insert recommendation 2>>
3. <<Insert recommendation 3>>

Recommended Resources:

1. <<Insert article links>>
2. <<Insert Benefits Checklist (as applicable)>>
3. <<Insert Employee and Family Support Strategies (as applicable)>>
4. <<Insert triage contact information (as applicable)>>

Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR Worklife AND WellBeing

SITUATION:
COVID-19-Related Crisis

To: <<Insert recipient email>>
From: <<Insert sender email>>
Subject: <<Insert personalized subject header>>

Dear Colleagues,

<<Department to insert personalized message here>>

I understand that this news is upsetting to hear, and will only compound the feelings of stress and sorrow many of us are already experiencing during this time of crisis. Accordingly, I have listed below the steps that our department plans to take to support both you and the family of <<Department to insert employee's name here>> as we process and heal from this great loss.

<<Department to insert support steps here>>

<<Center to insert support services info here>>

<<Center to insert general MLS info here>>

<<Department to insert leadership names here>>, as well as your Human Resources team, <<Department to insert local and central HR names here>>, are also available to talk if we can be of help to you. All of you are in our thoughts.

Sincerely,

<<Sender name(s)>>

Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR Worklife AND WellBeing

SITUATION:
COVID-19-Related Crisis

To: <<Insert recipient email>>
From: <<Insert sender email>>
Subject: <<Insert personalized subject header>>

Dear Colleagues,

<<Department to insert personalized message here>>

This is a stressful time, and many of us are feeling the emotional impact of the isolation, uncertainty, and fear that this crisis has brought into our department.

<<Center to insert support services info here>>

<<Center to insert general MLS info here>>

<<Department to insert leadership names here>>, as well as your Human Resources team, <<Department to insert local and central HR names here>>, are also available to talk if we can be of help to you. You and your family are in our thoughts – we wish you safe and healthy days ahead.

Sincerely,

<<Sender name(s)>>

MyLife Services

A network of experts for MIT faculty, staff, postdocs & families

Virtual Group Support Sessions

Provided by MyLife Services, a free, confidential counseling resource for MIT faculty, staff, postdocs, and their household members

SESSION DATE: << Insert Date and Time >>

Virtual Group Support

This session will allow us the space to share, process, and build a collective sense of wellbeing and cohesion.

The session will take place on MyLife Services' confidential and HIPAA-compliant virtual platform – participants can gain access to the session using the following login information:

- <<insert login information>>

If you are not able to join the group session or would prefer to seek private counseling and consultation, please know that MyLife Services' confidential support services are also available 24/7 by phone or email:

- 844-405-5433
- info@mitmylifeservices.com

About the Counselor



Kristin Matthews,
Senior Vice President of Clinical Services

Kristin joined MyLife Services in January 2007 and is currently Senior Vice President of Clinical Services. She oversees the daily operations for the clinical team, as well as provides assessment, counseling, and referral services to managers, Human Resources, employees, and their families. Kristin has extensive experience counseling children, adolescents, and adults in various settings. Prior to MyLife Services, she worked as an HR Representative for a Fortune 500 U.S. technology company in Cork, Ireland. Kristin received her BA in Psychology and Women's Studies from Bowdoin College and her MSW from Boston University.

MyLife Services is Supported by THE MIT CENTER FOR WorkLife AND WellBeing

Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR
WorkLife AND WellBeing

BENEFITS CHECKLIST FOR

Family Members

When a family member dies, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. In addition to coping with your own grief, there are so many pressing needs to address. As a family member of a deceased MIT employee, you may be entitled to a number of benefits and compensation. This checklist will make it easier for you to understand and claim them without adding stress to what is already a painful time for you and your family.

Inform MIT Benefits that your loved one has passed away:

MIT Benefits

Website: hr.mit.edu/life-events/death
Phone: 617-253-6151
Email: benefits@mit.edu

MIT Benefits will develop and mail you a customized summary of your loved one's benefits along with a request for documentation required for processing

MIT Benefits will connect you with other Human Resources services as needed

When reviewing your customized benefits summary, be sure to consider the information outlined below and contact MIT Benefits if you have questions:

Health, Dental, and Vision Insurance

- Was your loved one enrolled in an MIT Health, Dental, and/or Vision insurance plan? If so, when will the benefits terminate?
- Were you enrolled in your loved one's MIT Health, Dental, and/or Vision insurance plan as a family member? If so, what are your coverage options after your loved one's benefits terminate?
- Are there any outstanding bills or payments that require your attention?

Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR WorkLife AND WellBeing

BENEFITS CHECKLIST FOR

Family Members

Flexible Spending Account (FSA)

- Was your loved one enrolled in a Flexible Spending Account?
- If so, how may remaining funds (if any) be utilized?

Life and Accidental Death Insurance

- Did your loved one hold one or more MIT Life Insurance policies? (There are three options: Basic, Supplemental, and Dependent.)
- If you are listed as a beneficiary, what benefits can you expect and what steps are necessary for you to collect on these?

Retirement Plans (401(k) and Pension)

- Was your loved one enrolled in an MIT Retirement plan (e.g., 401(k) and Pension)?
- If you are listed as a beneficiary, what benefits can you expect and what steps are necessary for you to collect on these?

Other Benefits

- Was your loved one enrolled in a Long-Term Care Insurance policy?
- Did your loved one hold an account with MIT Federal Credit Union?
- If so, MIT Benefits can provide contact information for these vendors.

Need more help? Contact MIT MyLife Services – a 24/7, free, confidential counseling and consultative resource available to family members of deceased MIT employees – for emotional support and work-life resources and referrals

MIT MyLife Services

Website: my.kgalifeservices.com
Phone: 844-405-5433
Email: info@mitmylifeservices.com

Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR WorkLife AND WellBeing

Employee and Family Support Strategies

When an employee in your department passes away, colleagues and family members may look to you for support and guidance as they navigate through the grieving process. Responding to their expectations might feel layered and challenging. This guide provides strategies and resources that will help you begin guiding your organization through the painful experience of a collective loss toward healing and acceptance of a new normal.

Administrative Strategies:

- First, contact the MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing to develop a communications plan:
  - > Get ahead of the rumor mill and share news of your employee's passing with colleagues as soon as possible. Obtain email templates from the Center that will convey your sense of caring and compassion about the loss and outline available support services for your department.
  - > Consult with the Center about the best way to share the news with clients, vendors, colleagues outside your department, and others with whom your employee may have worked.
- Contact Information Technology for assistance with redirecting your employee's emails and phone calls.

Strategies for Supporting Employees:

- Contact the MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing to schedule MyLife Services employee support services. Departments may arrange to receive one or more of the following:
  - > Individual Sessions
  - > Group Sessions
  - > Outreach Phone Calls
  - > **Note:** If these support services will take place on campus, then the MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing will deliver MyLife Services materials to hand out as needed.
- Assign one colleague to communicate with the deceased employee's family on behalf of your department. This will protect the family from being inundated with calls and emails, while still allowing colleagues to receive information and provide support.

Human Resources

THE MIT CENTER FOR WorkLife AND WellBeing

Employee and Family Support Strategies

- Offer colleagues the opportunity to write letters of condolence to be sent to your employee's family in one care package (along with flowers, if appropriate).
- Organize a virtual meeting for your department or team so that colleagues can share fond memories of your employee and express what they will miss about working together.
- Make a targeted effort to call or email impacted employees to acknowledge their grief and encourage self-care:
  - > Acknowledge that they may find it difficult to concentrate during the initial mourning period.
  - > Normalize the need for everyone on your team to seek counseling and emotional support from others.
  - > Provide information about support through MyLife Services and encourage them to explore community, spiritual, and online resources that can help colleagues process their grief.

Strategies for Supporting Family Members:

- Reach out to your deceased employee's family directly to offer your condolences and ongoing support; provide them with contact information for the person from your department who will serve as their point of contact (if not yourself).
- Ask about funeral plans and whether the family would like department members to attend.
- If you have a discretionary fund or know that your team would like to make a contribution, ask the family whether your department can help cover a portion of the funeral or memorial service costs.
- Encourage the employee's family to contact the MIT Center for WorkLife and WellBeing. Emotional support through MyLife Services remains available as a benefit to family members following the death of an employee.
- Provide the family with the Benefits Checklist.
- Consider creating a memorial fund in honor of your employee and his or her family. Ask the family what organization(s) or charities they would like to sponsor the fund.