

WORKING REMOTELY – PEER GROUPS

Workplaces are no longer central locations with set hours. Increasingly they are decentralised, sometimes international and often virtual. This means employees can kiss the commute goodbye and embrace new ways of working.

Working remotely can, however, sometimes feel remote. Which is why building a network of virtual peer groups with your colleagues is a great idea.



WORKING REMOTELY

DON'T BE ISOLATED

Loneliness, disconnect, and isolation can affect remote workers, especially if you are used to an office-based culture or are an extrovert - or both. Many companies with remote work cultures offer social options. These commonly include chat channels where employees share common interests, meetups for people in the same area and face-to-face awaydays. Take advantage of them or be proactive in setting up your own.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR PEERS

Centralised working provides structure and a sense of identity that virtual working does not. But out of sight doesn't have to be out of mind. Peer groups are networks of allies who provide mutual support, co-learning and positive relationships to counter the risk of loneliness. They can be set up over a range of platforms and can be formal or informal. They provide opportunities for one-on-ones and create a culture of connection. They are more than just communicating over email, chat and social media. They are based on meaningful interactions, shared experience and mutual support.

If you're not at a company with a strong remote culture, you may need to be more proactive about nurturing relationships. Take the initiative and set up work chat groups away from official channels. Get to know your colleagues outside of work parameters. Ask them questions. What are their interests? What do they do away from work? You can find more ideas for peer working groups [on our website](#). Encourage facetime. If your organisation does not already, ask to have annual or semi-annual trips and meets. It could be for planning, training, or team building. Or, tack it on to some other business event, such as a trade conference.

HAVE A GO

Get in touch with two other team member and set up a buddy group. Buddy groups work best in three's. Smaller groups mean people are more likely to keep in touch. Use WhatsApp. Arrange regular meets in person and if there's a group challenge, work on it in the week and come together to chat it through.

Set up a team WhatsApp group dedicated to helping each other with work problems. Peer to peer support is a great way to problem solve and you can share tips and advice.

Get a virtual team together for online social events such as quiz nights and exercise challenges. If your colleagues are spread out geographically and can't get together in person, use platforms such as Zoom or House Party to host virtual socials.