



Social Distance, Emotional Connection

March 27, 2020

SMART STRATEGIES FOR THE VIRTUAL WORKPLACE



Lead from within

Welcome!



Catherine Harrison
Webinar Host

Client Experience Associate,
Coaching Services



How to participate in today's webinar

1. Participate in the poll

- At one point during this webinar, you'll be invited to participate in a group poll. Please do so!

2. Type in your questions

- Kate will save time at the end for discussion and questions. You will use the Q&A function to type in your questions, and we will read them aloud.
- If you have a question at any time during the webinar, please feel free to write-in your question using the “Q&A” or “chat” function in your Zoom window.

3. Troubleshooting

- If you need help troubleshooting at any time during the webinar, please send me a private chat or a direct email at charrison@nebocompany.com

Kate Ebner
Founder and CEO,
Executive Leadership Coach



Social Distance, Emotional Connection

We are living, leading, and working in unprecedented times.

Social distancing is the recommended strategy for slowing the spread of Covid-19. As employers shift to remote work, how can we intentionally reduce isolation, provide connection and community and even strengthen culture with a virtual workforce?

Key Takeaways:

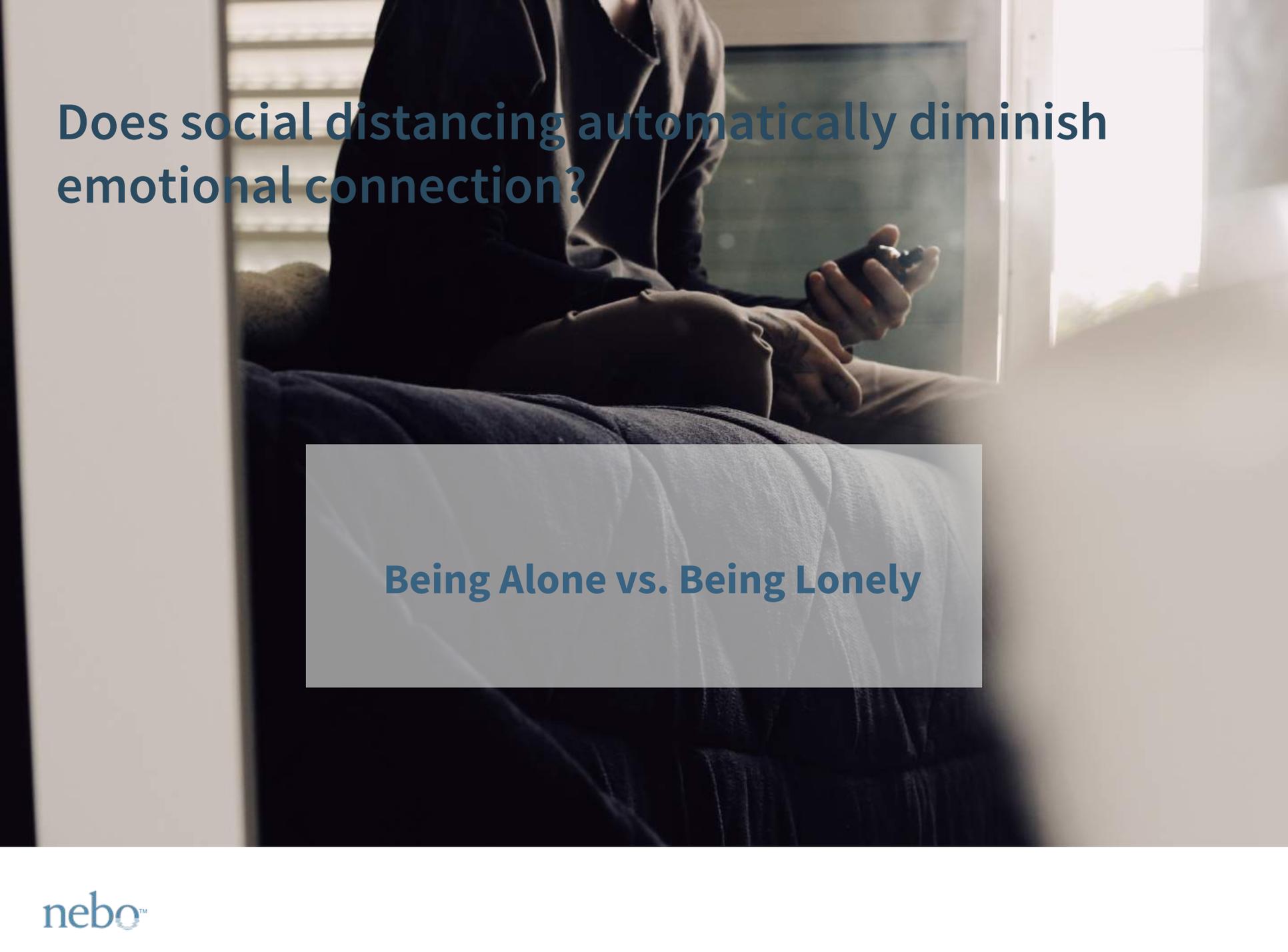
- Redefine what it means to be connected when working virtually
- Learn strategies to help reduce isolation and provide connection and community for your employees and team members
- Consider how culture may be strengthened through the experience of the virtual workplace

Social Distance as a Strategy for Public Health

Social distancing is a public health practice that aims to prevent sick people from coming in close contact with healthy people in order to reduce opportunities for disease transmission.

- Includes measures such as canceling group events, closing public spaces, avoiding crowds, staying six feet apart, and staying home

No hugs
No kisses
No handshakes
No sharing food and drink
Stay six feet apart
Wash hands frequently

A person is sitting on a dark-colored couch, looking down at a smartphone held in their hands. The person is wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants. The background shows a window with blinds, and bright light is coming from the right side, creating a soft glow. The overall mood is contemplative and somewhat isolated.

Does social distancing automatically diminish emotional connection?

Being Alone vs. Being Lonely

Being together in the digital age moves way beyond conference calls

- We are hanging out digitally – side by side
 - Slack
 - Google Hang-out
 - Facetime
- We are collaborating electronically
 - Google Drive
 - Basecamp
 - Microsoft Teams
 - Shared Calendars
- We are in face-to-face meetings on screen
 - Zoom
 - Skype
 - Citrix Go-to-Meeting
 - Blue Jeans

- As human beings, we still crave quality time in person, but we have more ways to be responsive, stay in touch and show we care than ever before
- For digital natives, togetherness and technology are intertwined
- For Gen X and Baby Boomers, technology is a “second language” and an enabler and sometimes a barrier

Feeling connected means feeling in touch with someone who cares about us



How do we know we are connected?

- **ATTENTION:** Can I get your attention when I need it?
- **COMFORT:** Can you comfort me when I am anxious, sad, lonely or afraid?
- **CARE:** Do you care about my well-being, even when we are not together?

--Psychology Today

Poll: On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being overload and 1 being not connected, how are you feeling about the amount of virtual connection you are experiencing?



The need for emotional connection is part of our human condition

- Feeling emotionally deserted, rejected or abandoned sparks physical and emotional pain and panic.
 - *How might the Coronavirus epidemic trigger these feelings for the people in our lives?*
- We pull each other into loops and spirals of connection and disconnection.
 - *Who is helping you stay connected or do you wish would reach out?*
 - *Who can you reach out to?*
- Emotional balance, calm and happiness are rewards of connection.
- We all hit the panic button at times. The key is to take responsibility for not staying there.

Emotion tells us exactly what we need if we are willing to use it as a guide.

Inspired by Hold Me Tight, Dr. Sue Johnson

Leading virtually is still leading

- **Leadership is a public act.** We can see you, notice how you are doing, read your face and tone, and observe your intensity.
- Remember to put your own “oxygen mask on first.”
- During a stressful crisis time, your exhaustion and selfless sacrifice could result in greater consequences for you and others if you lose perspective, optimism and become reactive.

With social distancing and Covid-19 as the backdrop right now, let's check in with YOU:

- How are you doing?
- In the chat box, please name some of the emotions that you are feeling this week.
- Are you noticing changeability in your emotional state over the course of a day and the week?

Please consider joining our April 24th Webinar: Chief Resilience Officer (You) for more about how to think about and take action for greater resiliency.

**With all this virtual connection, do people actually
FEEL connected?**



Let empathy to guide you in choosing methods for sustaining connection with your colleagues

What might your staff or team be thinking, feeling, needing right now? What would YOU be wishing for in their place?

Open Space – No Agenda

- Virtual Coffees
- Open Hours
- Virtual Lunch
- Virtual Happy Hour
- Virtual Book Group
- Other Affinity Groups
- What else?

Reach Out – Reliable Structures for Connecting

- Daily "Huddle"
- Staff Meeting
- Leadership Team Meeting
- One-on-one Check In Conversations
- Weekly Update Communications
- What else?

Loop Back – Showing You Care

- Follow through on your commitments
- Notice how individuals are engaging or not engaging and inquire
- Appreciate others' contributions
- Share and invite progress reports
- Remember and notice aloud the goals, hopes, fears, achievements of others

Remember that rituals are an important part of belonging



- Meeting and separation are key attachment moments
- Regular small gestures that signal: “You matter to me” make a difference in conveying connection
- Design ways to bond (virtual coffee, GroupMe, etc.)
- Taking time for check-ins at the start of meetings
- Learn something together
- Recognize special days – work anniversaries, birthdays, achievements
- Listen to each other’s stories
- Notice what’s working and not working, and tweak as you go

Select a combination of strategies for connection – one or two is not enough, adjust as you go

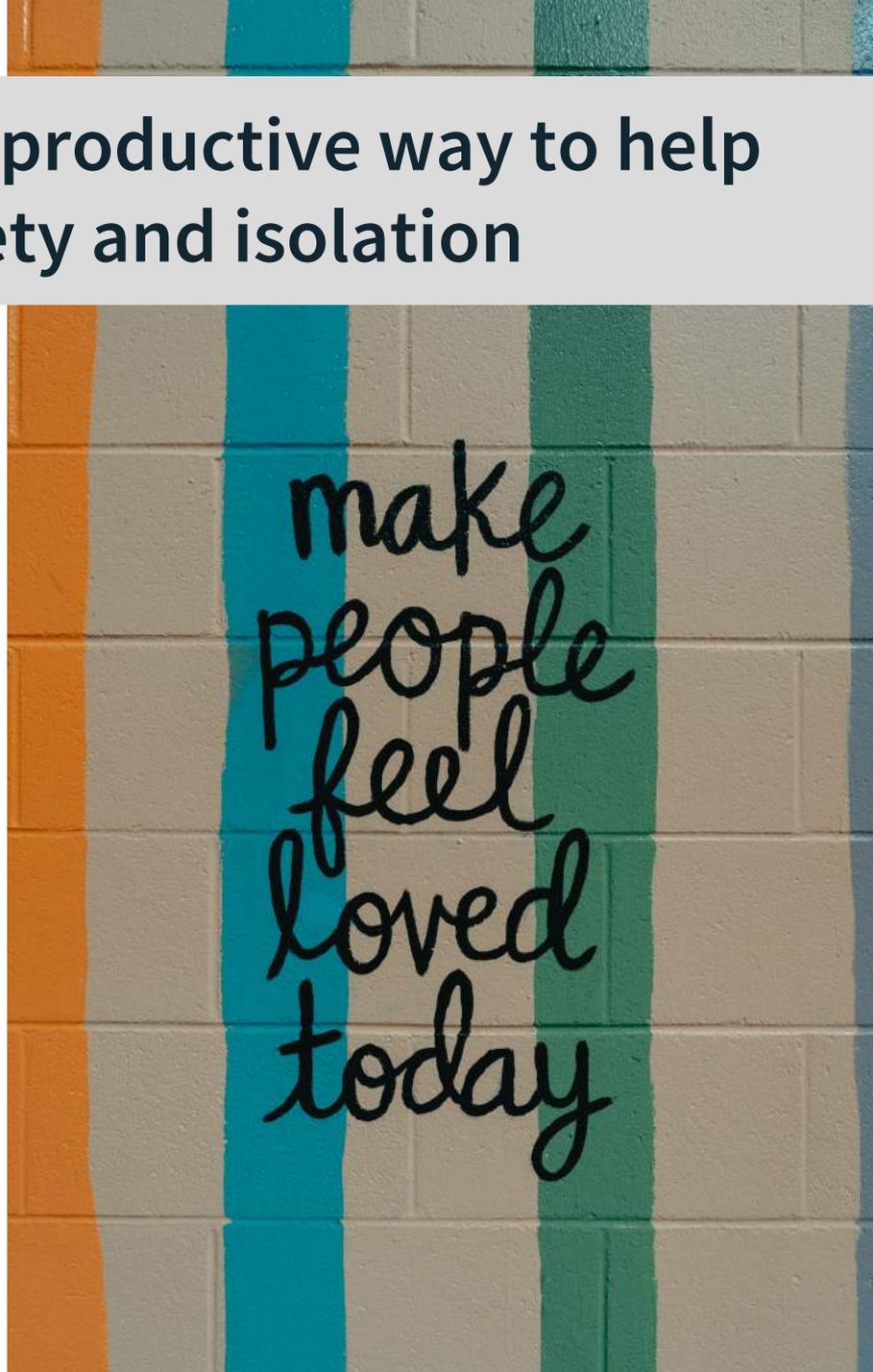


*Make a pattern.
Mix it up!*

1. Establish a cadence of purposeful, regular meetings with clear agendas
2. Commit to a reliable pattern of updates and progress reports
3. Create fun rituals through virtual social events and touchpoints
4. Make sure that not everything is structured – leave space for spontaneity and open conversation
5. Pay attention to people through group and one-on-one check-ins

Increased focus is a useful, productive way to help people move through anxiety and isolation

- Help people stay connected to the mission, vision and values of your organization by giving them responsibilities that really matter in our new context
 - Covid-19 Task Force with Captain
 - Business Continuity Captain
 - Outreach Leader
 - Culture and Morale Builder
 - Virtual Workplace Innovation Team
 - Strategic Action Committee

A photograph of a wall with several vertical stripes in orange, teal, and light blue. Handwritten in black marker on the wall is the phrase "make people feel loved today".

make
people
feel
loved
today

Build trust during a hard time by being real, looking ahead and staying connected

- As leaders, we feel great responsibility, not only for the future of our organizations and businesses, but also for the people who bring them to life every day.
- The future will be influenced by our actions today, yet we do not have control of the ultimate outcomes.
- Most leaders today cannot predict what the future holds.

Top Three Characteristics of the Most Admired Leaders?

Honest

Competent

Inspiring

Forward-looking

Discussion



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- Read *Five Strategies for Leading A Virtual Team* by Nebo Vice President Erin Gregg
- Sign up to receive a daily piece of encouragement in your inbox via the Spring Tonic
- Receive our monthly e-newsletter, *Lead from Within*



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for the Virtual Workplace Webinar Series*

**Scaffolding the New Virtual
Workplace**

April 3, 12:15 EST

Chief Resilience Officer (You)

April 24, 12:15pm EST

**Insider's Guide to Leading in
Uncertain Times**

May 8, 12:15pm EST

Thank you!

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