



How to handle tech stress (and communicate effectively) while working from home

POSTED BY LAUREN GEALL FOR CAREERS

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As people all over the country come to terms with the reality of [working from home](#) for the foreseeable future, the technological frustrations many of us have been dealing with over the last couple of months are really starting to hit home.

[Not being able to speak to our colleagues face-to-face is hard enough](#) – but when internet problems and technological mishaps make communicating even harder, it can be particularly frustrating to deal with. After all, there's nothing quite like trying to get your point across while four members of your team shout “can you hear me?” as their internet crashes for the 99th time.

And then there are those moments when you send a perfectly crafted email to explain what you were *meant* to say on your call, only for the recipient to get it late or miss it completely, because their inbox is full of messages from your co-workers all trying to do the same thing. It's exhausting to think about, right?

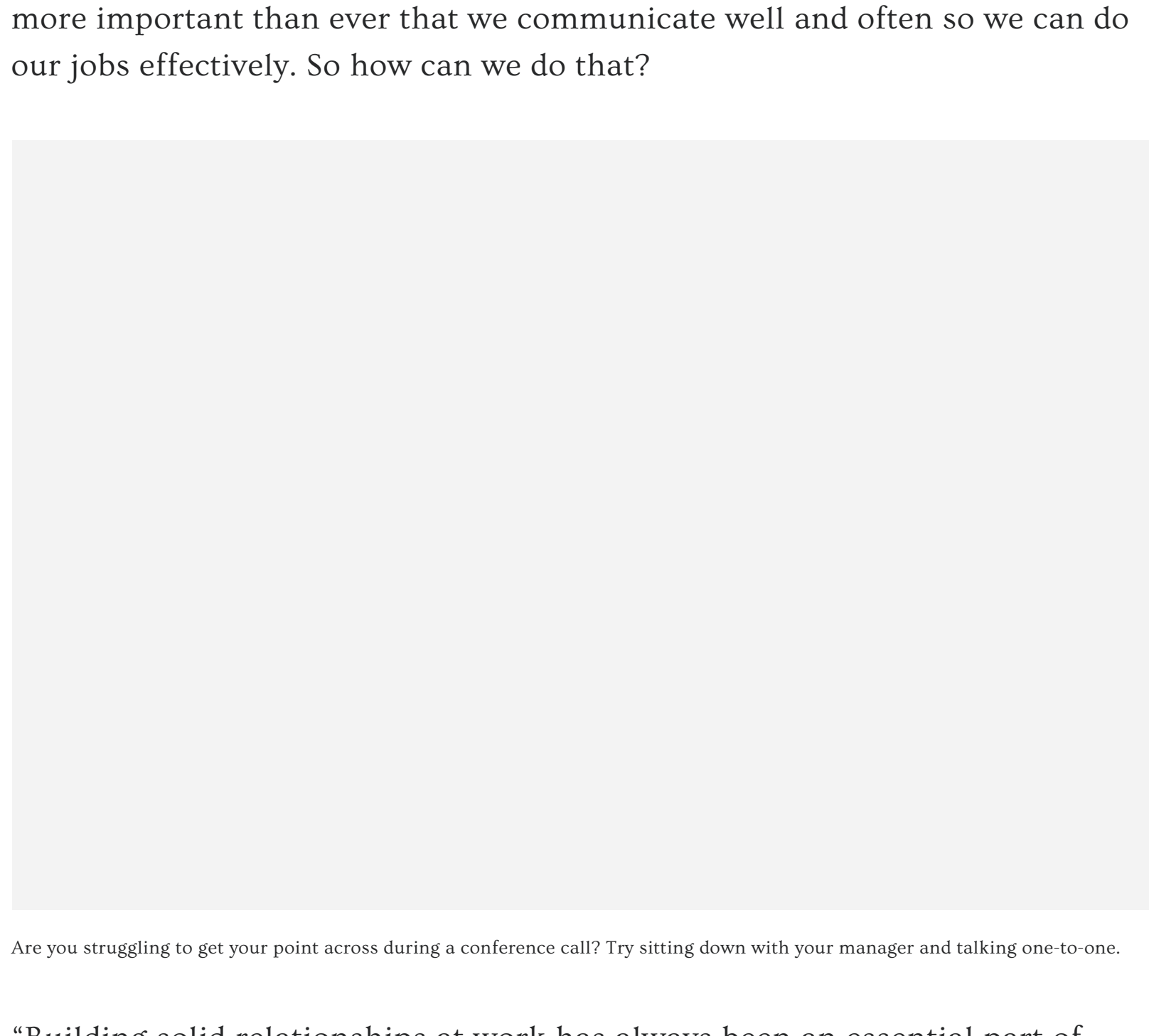


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Of course, internet issues and missed emails aren't anyone's fault – after all, these are unprecedented times and we're all having to adapt to a new “normal” – but it's OK to feel a little bit frustrated when you're not able to communicate as effectively as you'd like to. It's at times like these when we realise how important sitting down with someone and just talking really is, especially when it comes to communicating mood and knowing where you stand with someone.

For people (like me) who [need that validation](#) of knowing where they stand to feel secure, working from home and getting a point across has been difficult. Indeed, in a situation like the one we find ourselves in right now, it's probably more important than ever that we communicate well and often so we can do our jobs effectively. So how can we do that?



Are you struggling to get your point across during a conference call? Try sitting down with your manager and talking one-to-one.

“Building solid relationships at work has always been an essential part of businesses but now more than ever they need to be rebuilt or made better while working remotely,” explains Alexandra Lichtenfeld, business mentor and founder of [Client Matters](#). “Closer relationships may need to be established where they may not have been in the past. This means trust is essential and comes from talking and understanding each other.”

For Lichtenfeld, communicating effectively when we're working from home doesn't just mean a morning conference call and catch up with the team – it means individual, one-to-one conversations when they're needed.

“Make time in the day for a group chat discussing how everyone is actually feeling,” she explains. “A 9am morning group call is a useful way to align as a team on the week ahead but also ensure you have a one-to-one discussion with your line manager to foster wellbeing – it doesn't have to be all work related either.”

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“In terms of communicating efficiently, this is not a time for holding back”

Lichtenfeld also explains that, while we may feel disconnected from the working environment while we're WFH, it's still important to air any grievances you have as soon as they arise.

“In terms of communicating efficiently, this is not a time for holding back,” she says. “If something is upsetting you relating to work, then voice your problem with your colleagues or manager. Senior management teams, line managers and business leaders in general should not assume everything is OK.”



If you're struggling with something or have a frustration to raise with a co-worker, make sure you raise it how you normally would.

It goes without saying that relying on emails and Slack group chats aren't enough to keep everyone connected. As [cyber psychologist Linda Kaye explains](#): “It's always quite difficult to communicate in any text based communication – that's always been a challenge.”

“What normally happens when you're emailing the people you work with is that you then follow things up outside that email conversation and things get resolved and rectified in different ways – not just over that platform. But now there's more demand to get things done in one space.”

With this in mind, it's important to diversify the methods of communication you're using while you're working from home – and work with other members of your team to address any difficulties you might be facing.

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“During conference calls, we should go with our gut feelings and really listen to everyone so you can spot those who might be having problems,” Lichtenfeld adds. “If technology fails and calls drop out and quality is poor, try not to get frustrated... it happens, it's not your fault and it will correct itself in due course.”

“Remember, everyone is in the same boat!”

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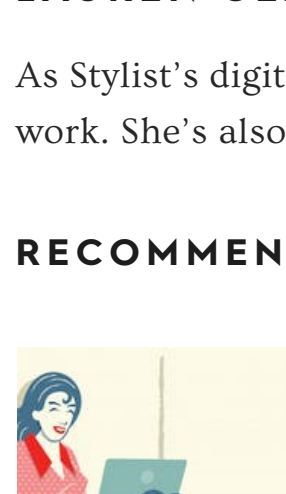
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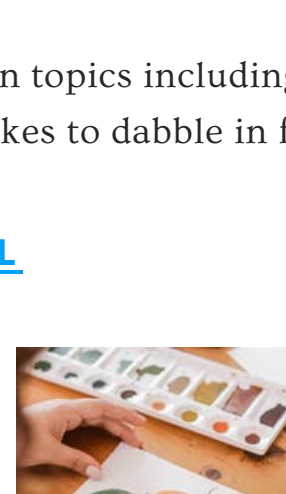
LAUREN GEALL

As Stylist's digital writer, Lauren Geall writes on topics including mental health, wellbeing and work. She's also a big fan of houseplants and likes to dabble in film and TV from time-to-time.

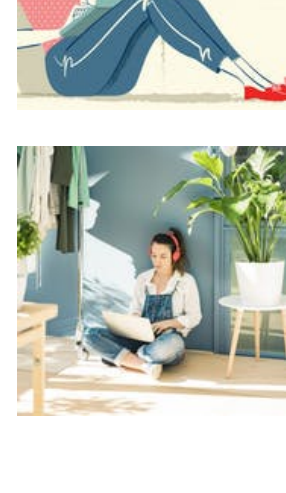
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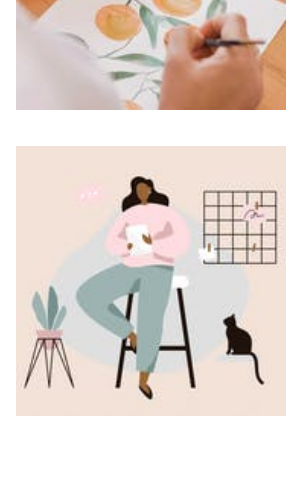
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