

Supervisory Notes – 5 Strategies For Managers to Support Employees Through COVID-19



The Covid-19 pandemic has separated people from their workplaces and coworkers. It has added stress, led to a drop in morale, and possibly poor team performance. That's why **actively fostering a sense of inclusion at work is so critical right now**. Leadership needs to provide employees a sense of stability, empowerment, and inclusion despite the crisis:

1. **Show Appreciation** Recognize, praise, and show appreciation for a person's dedication, effort, and contribution to a work place goes a long way. Even small acts of affirmation from a superior, like saying thank you for a job well done or sending an email acknowledging their efforts is everything to a hard-working employee.

2. **Provide Individualized Support** When leaders show an understanding of employees' needs, preferences, and circumstances, and then give the employee the individualized support they need to help achieve goals, team goals are met. Employees will also have different family situations and varying degrees of familiarity with remote-work technology – it is really important to know the wants and needs of your team.

3. **Involve Employees in Decision Making** In a time of great uncertainty and stress, leaders who seek out input from employees, are showing trust in the people they have hired. This makes it seem like they are a part of the “team.” Hold “What's your opinion?” meetings, so that employees can participate in where the company is going, and organize open forums for them to ask questions and share their thoughts.

4. **Trust Employees with New Responsibilities** New responsibilities will give employees confidence to get to know other colleagues better, while contributing to the group's success. Leaders need to ask themselves: Am I more inclusive of some people than others? Are there people I am inadvertently leaving out? Trust in your people with new responsibilities equally and drive inclusion throughout.

5. **Designate Time and Space for Team Bonding** When leaders create specific opportunities for their team to connect and bond with their coworkers the team thrives. It could be a trivia contest or bowling, whatever it takes to loosen things up. These practices help people get to know each other in an informal setting, relieve stress, and motivate them to perform well in their jobs.

The pandemic has given leaders an opportunity to reflect on how to actively demonstrate inclusive and supportive behavior for their teams. Seek out new ways to expand your repertoire of inclusive behaviors by incorporating some new practices. Navigating the unforeseen issues of a pandemic tests leadership; but it can also help you expand your comfort zone, and become a better leader.

Leading is not easy. If you're stuck or need help analyzing your situation and could use someone to talk to, give Best Care EAP a call at **402-354-8000** or **800-801-4182** or email eap@bestcareeap.org. **Counselors are just a phone call away.**