



Managing Employees During Challenging Times



These are challenging times to be a manager; our employee's needs will vary and change over time. While some people are dealing with the challenges of working from home, others are coming to campus grappling with other serious concerns, some have serious health vulnerabilities, others have serious financial vulnerabilities. Leaders are used to making things happen and solving problems. Accept that you will feel great when you can solve a problem or answer a question only to feel inadequate or helpless when you can't. During times of change and uncertainty, it is important to acknowledge your fluctuating feelings and recognize them as normal.

TRY THESE MANAGEMENT IDEAS; THEY MAY SEEM SIMPLE BUT YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE A LITTLE AT A TIME.

- Be more visible and accessible, this is especially important during times of change, high demand or high intensity.
- Clarify boundaries, roles, and expectations. Ambiguity creates additional stress.
- Seek factual information and direction from Human Resources at hr.utexas.edu.
- Acknowledge the challenges and the accomplishments of your employees.
- Maintain personal awareness of your own needs and challenges.
- Normalize the difficulty of focusing and adjusting when employees are concerned about their most basic needs for safety and security.
- Verbalize the purpose, values and goals of your department to remind employees that they are making a difference during a challenging time.
- Don't promise something that you don't have control over or are not sure about. Short term soothing can translate into broken trust in the long term.
- Strategize solutions with your team when possible to allow your staff to have input and a focus on things they can control at a time when we, in general, have less control.
- Let your team know how you will share information and make decisions at this time
- Develop routines and structure your day, when possible, to reflect routines you had in your office.
- If working from home, thoughtfully set up your workspace to maximize your effectiveness.
- Recognize that when you are learning new things you will make mistakes. At a time like this, we have to learn to do things in new ways and it will help if we can accept making mistakes.
- Model self-care and be patient and compassionate with yourself. We are more able to help others if we are taking good care of ourselves.
- Look for times and ways to relax have fun as a team.
- Right now, pause and identify one thing, such as regulated breathing or practicing gratitude, to work into your schedule today or this week to intentionally care for your emotional health.
- Consult with EAP counselors when you need help figuring out how to apply these tips to your particular situation or to refer an employee. We can also help workgroups debrief during crisis.
- Check out our websites: HealthPoint EAP at eap.utexas.edu and HealthPoint Wellness at healthpoint.utexas.edu websites for resources and relevant articles.

