Tips and Resources for Managers of Employees with Caregiving Responsibilities During COVID-19

Things to Say

- Be as transparent as possible. Acknowledge potential difficulties or issues for your team member up front since they may not feel comfortable raising their anxieties and concerns.
- Understand that this is not a typical telecommuting situation and explicitly communicate that. Reassure your team members that it’s ok if there are kids in the background, noise, pets, etc.
- Check in with your staff more frequently and make space for the personal alongside the professional. Ask how their caregiving is going and let them know it’s ok to have caregiving take priority at times. Be aware that while some team members may desire more interpersonal connection, other may desire more privacy.
- Ask what you can do to best support your staff.

Organizing the Work

- Be flexible with schedules but firm on goals. As a team, establish shared agreement on convenient meeting times and possibly contact windows during the day.
- Determine priorities and goals as a team, as well as with individuals. Aim for no more than 2-3 tangible objectives each week. Acknowledge that goals may extend into the following week.
- Revisit those priorities and goals regularly. Include them on your 1:1 and/or team meeting agendas, as appropriate.
- Look for opportunities to accomplish team projects asynchronously. For example, that zoom meeting might work as a google doc or word doc on box.
- Build asynchronous shared learning or professional development into your work goals. For example ask that your staff screen a film or listen to a podcast that enriches your work as part of their working hours and in their own time.

Things to Do

- Focus on establishing trust, leading with empathy and open, frequent communication.
- Share available resources, particularly mental health support, often. Consider forwarding the weekly YourLife and bimonthly Well-being During COVID-19 newsletters to your team. Sign-up here to receive these communications.
- Demonstrate that you acknowledge your staffers familial needs by sharing non-productivity related resources for parents you come across (like online story times)
- Be alert for changes in people’s behavior and/or work and encourage your team to take breaks and PTO. Let them know they should and are expected to disconnect from work during that time.
- Take care of yourself and model prioritizing your well-being and, if relevant, your own caregiving.
- Consider organizing a team well-being activity like doing Your Daily 15 together.
- If you’re struggling with a management issue, ask for help from your own manager, your HR BP, and your fellow managers via the MS Teams Leading Distributed Teams channel and weekly dialogues.

Helpful Articles and Tools:

- Supporting Families During COVID-19
- Be the Coronavirus Boss Working Parents Need
- BCCWF Tip Sheet: Balancing Caregiving and Remote Work
- Cleo COVID-19 Resources
- Template Action Plan for Remote Caregivers