



HELPING HANDS



Work Relationships During Corona Virus

Excerpts from Psychology Today by Jeremy S. Nicholson, M.A., M.S.W.

As states open up their societies, workplace policies and procedures are changing. Along with the new policies and procedures, work relationships will need attention. Here are some ideas about optimizing these relationships:

1. Re-prioritize Needs and Goals

In times of crisis and difficulty, our basic needs for food, safety, love, and connection with others become much more important. As a result, focusing on relationship goals and interactions that serve to support basic physical and emotional well-being is vital during difficult times. In essence, by meeting each other's needs for health, safety, and emotional connection right now, throughout daily relationship exchanges, you and your co-workers can create a better and more satisfying connection.

Listening to a co-worker's stresses and fears is very valuable when times are tough. Furthermore, showing care, competence, and dependability are among the most important ways to keep relationships running smoothly.

2. Maintain Connection and Conversation

During stressful times, emotions can run high. Therefore, it becomes even more important to maintain and increase the positive connection and communication within your work relationships. To do so, focus on being genuine, empathetic, and warm to one another during your interactions. Non-verbal behaviors like smiling and good eye contact can help to build a sense of connection. Paying attention to body language can be helpful also.

To keep the conversation going, you can ask questions or tell a personal story, along with showing enthusiasm and appreciation for what is being shared. Overall, this self-disclosure of thoughts and feelings helps to create better communication.

4. Highlight what is Important and Special

Relationships are important and special and are the very foundations for our ability to cope, function, and survive in the world. Therefore, make sure to take time to be mindful and grateful to one another for what each of you brings to the relationship—both the everyday efforts, as well as the unique and individual traits.

Sharing such gratitude improves everyone's mood and motivates future positive relationship behaviors. Highlighting what is important, including reducing stress, improving support for each other, and increasing work satisfaction.

5. Build Trust and Commitment

Sharing essential goals, connecting in a positive way, and being grateful will help lead to other vital aspects of work relationships—trust and commitment. A relationship where both parties trust one another and are committed to shared goals is a relationship that can function effectively. Ultimately, trust is developed when both parties behave in ways that are best for the relationship. This helps to create a more equal and fair relationship.

6. Engage in Problem-Solving and Forgiveness

Even with the best of intentions, problems are going to spring up. When people get upset, they do not think clearly, and mistakes happen. Therefore, the last step in maintaining positive relationships, especially during difficult times, is learning how to handle problems and disagreements in a healthy way. Focusing on maintaining positive communication and motivation, from the steps above, can help you work through difficulties.

When tempers flare, take a moment to calm yourselves, acknowledge each other's point of view, and communicate optimism for solving the problem. From there, additional steps can be taken to find a compromise.

TIPS FOR DEVELOPING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

(excerpts from Lorri Friefield, Trainingmag.com, March 21, 2013)

Accept and celebrate differences. We are all different. We can perceive the world in many ways. We feel more comfortable when we feel that people “get” us and can see our point of view. Life, however, would be very dull if we were all the same and, while we may find it initially easier, the novelty of sameness soon would wear off. Accepting and celebrating that we are all different is a great starting point.

Listen effectively. Listening is a crucial skill in any relationship. Listening and understanding what others communicate to us is the most important part of successful interaction and vice versa.

Active or reflective listening is the single most useful and important listening skill. In active listening, we are gaining an understanding of what the other person is thinking, feeling, wanting. We are active in checking out our understanding before we respond. We restate or paraphrase our understanding of their message and reflect it back to the sender who will verify that we understood or clarify what we may have missed.

Give people your time. Giving time to people is also a huge gift. In a world where time is of the essence, we don't always have the time to give to our loved ones, friends, or work colleagues. Technology can erode our ability to build real rapport and we attempt to multi-task by texting and talking at the same time.

Being present in the time you give to people is also important, so that, when you are with someone, you are truly with someone and not dwelling in the past or worrying about the future. Devoting time, energy, and effort to developing and building relationships is one of the most valuable life skills.

Manage mobile technology. Use technology to enhance communication, rather than distract from it.

Develop empathy. Empathy and understanding builds connection between people. It is a state of perceiving and relating to another person's feelings and needs. Empathy also means “reading” another person's inner state and interpreting it in a way that will help the other person and offer support and develop mutual trust.



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peer coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

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Phillip Skaar 704-650-3401, E-mail: phillipskaar@aol.com

IAM EAP Director, District 142 Paul Shultz 704-907-3563
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Sources for Credible Outbreak- Related Health Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027 1-800-
CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
<https://www.cdc.gov>

World Health Organization

Regional Office for the Americas
of the World Health Organiza-
tion
525 23rd Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

202-974-3000
<http://www.who.int/en>

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