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WHAT SUPERVISORS/MANAGERS CAN DO TO SUPPORT AND RESPOND TO EMPLOYEES DURING THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC

Supervisors and Managers have a critical role in providing care, compassion, and support to your staff, as well as identify when someone may need additional psychological help, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when employees are under additional stress. Thus, your job is to support and to respond when needed. Below is some guidance to help you do both.

Stress reactions are physical, psychological, cognitive, and behavioral. Most people who experience stress reactions during a crisis do not always need psychological help, but need more social support and understanding. It is important for supervisors and managers to recognize the difference, and know how to both support and respond.

Things that Managers/Supervisors can do to Support employees:

- Provide comfort and address basic needs
- Be aware that some employees may have families and loved ones who are requiring additional attention so ask about how employees are managing their work and family/non-work
- Be aware that some employees may be socially isolated outside of work
- Provide connection to critical resources, and that means being aware of such resources
- Listen and stay connected to your staff and validate their feelings
- Continue to take care of your own social, physical, and psychological needs; this also helps with role modeling
- Think about ways of decreasing additional non-essential demands on your staff to free them up to do the critical work
- Reduce uncertainty as much as possible, as uncertainty causes immense stress and fear

Ways Managers/Supervisors can Respond to employees in need:

- Recognize signs of struggle such as distress, social withdrawal, poor performance, all things that deviate from a person's baseline
- Mental health problems are not the same as mental illness
- Stress and burnout during a crisis can lead to mental health problems that if recognized, can be alleviated through support and professional help
- Set the tone that it is OK to seek psychological help when in need and know about the available mental health resources
- Making sure you stay up-to-date on safety and public health COVID-19 responses relevant to your team/unit, discuss impacts to your work practices with upper leadership, and regularly inform your team/unit of any changes to activities and priorities

Leslie Hammer, Ph.D. hammerl@ohsu.edu

Oregon and the Workplace Blog on 4 key strategies to help supervisors support employee well-being during COVID-19: https://bit.ly/2R2nHJn