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WHAT **TEAM LEADERS** CAN DO TO SUPPORT AND RESPOND TO EMPLOYEES DURING THE COVID-19

Leslie B. Hammer, Ph.D.
Co-Director, Oregon Healthy Workforce Center,
Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences, OHSU

The Emergency Operations Center at OHSU during the Covid-19 pandemic includes teams for psychological support and wellness. YOU also have a role in providing care, compassion, and support to your staff, as well as identifying when someone may need additional psychological help. 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 Team Leaders 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
- Be transparent about what you know, what you don't know and how you will try to get more answers

Ways Team Leaders 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
- Remember that 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 brief 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
- Make 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
- Know about the most up to date wellness resources for OHSU employees, learners, residents and faculty and remind people of these resources regularly in meetings (consider posting information about wellness resources in your workrooms, nonpatient areas)

WHAT ARE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR LEARNING MORE ABOUT WHAT TEAM LEADERS CAN DO?

- Manager support Oregon Live by Leslie Hammer: <https://www.oregonlive.com/business/2020/04/how-managers-can-help-their-employees-in-times-of-crisis-according-to-ohsu-researchers.html> - _blank
- Manager support blog post by Leslie Hammer: <https://blogs.ohsu.edu/occupational-health-sciences/2020/03/25/4-key-strategies-to-help-supervisors-support-employee-well-being-during-covid-19/>
- Apps like “PFA Mobile” and “Psychological First Aid (PFA) Tutorial” are free and can offer a good introduction to the primary elements of PFA.
- Johns Hopkins offers a full-length 6-7 hour course for PFA
 - <https://www.coursera.org/learn/psychological-first-aid>