Managing your Team through Change
Facilities Managers and Supervisors

During the COVID-19 outbreak managing change effectively can help you and your team transition to a new way of working. It is important to remember that everyone adapts to change differently and at their own pace. Rapid change can cause periods of stress and handling change at work when employees are also worried about personal situations, as well as national and international events, can be overwhelming.

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance and resources, including learning opportunities, to help you prepare yourself and your team to effectively transition to a new way of working which for many of us includes social distancing and managing staff remotely on a regular basis.

Take care of Yourself, first

Before taking care of others, you need to care for yourself. It is important that you focus on yourself and how you adapt to change so that you can manage your teams effectively. Self-care can mean different things to different people, consider some of the suggestions below:

- **Set boundaries: Professional and Personal.**
  - Pay attention to the news you consume, the people you talk to, and the thoughts and feelings you have that impact your sense of well-being.
  - Set boundaries to protect your spirit.
    - Topics that are off-limits for discussion
    - Time alone, or with others, as needed
  - Pace your day. Remote working can be draining if too much of your day is on the phone or Zoom.
  - Remember that in addition to regular meetings with your team, you may be on calls with peers, your manager, or other members of your team.
    - “Own Your Calendar” - To manage phone time, proactively schedule meetings, breaks in-between calls, and brief social interactions as needed.

- **Identify Resources**
  - How can you help your team and colleagues (and vice versa)?
  - How can your manager help and support you (and vice versa)?
  - Is there a trusted college/friend that you have in the workplace whom you can trust and confide in to share your feelings and ask for advice?

- **Affirmations**
  - Tell yourself “you’ve got this” - because you are probably doing better than you think!
  - Have a go-to affirmation that you can tell yourself when you’re struggling. Something like "I'm safe" or "I'm doing the best I can."

- **Let it out!**
  - Spend a few minutes getting your thoughts and feelings on paper or with a trusted colleague to clear your mind and make space for positivity.

- **Breathe**
  - Take a deep breath and sigh it out (yes, make noise!) to release tension in your body.
Manager Engagement with Team

One of the most important things you can do in your leadership role is to model the behavior you wish to see in your staff.

- **Empathetic Behaviors**
  - Be present, empathetic, and listen to employee concerns.
  - Recognize and accept that employees may show frustration or anger as a way to handle the change.
  - Encourage discussion and be open to different perspectives/opinions.

- **Provide frequent individual and collective communication**
  - Say “hi” or “good morning” via text/email or Slack (in person, as appropriate).
  - Identify a consistent day (or time of day) for even a brief check-in meeting.
  - Plan for some fun, as appropriate. Quick team building activities can provide connection and build trust amongst the team.

- **Use technology tools like Outlook, OneDrive, SharePoint, and/or Google Docs**
  - To help with organizing and prioritize key tasks.
  - Set performance and behavior standards.
  - Enable delegation and share clear expectations.
  - Empower others to take responsibility and come up with solutions.
  - Encourage innovation - pilot a new way of doing something.

**Virtual Meeting Planning**

Plan ahead for meetings, set an agenda, ensure appropriate people are invited, and commit to sending out a follow-up or summary of the meeting.

- Check calendars to gauge best availability (day and time) for the meeting.
- Whenever possible, send meeting agendas a minimum of 1 business day in advance and offer the option for staff to add to the agenda.
- Schedule a “TEST Meeting” to simply confirm everyone has access, answer any technical questions, and allow you to set the expectations for Zoom/video conferencing interactions.
Virtual Meeting Etiquette and Tips

Most meetings for the foreseeable future should be facilitated by the use of our digital collaboration resources (Zoom, Jabber, etc.) and should not be held physically in conference rooms, if at all possible, to comply with social distancing requirements.

- Sign in to a meeting 5 minutes early to test that the technology is working.
- Be aware of background noise.
  - Mute your microphone when not speaking.
  - Encourage people to speak loudly and clearly (especially those who may be practicing social distancing in a conference room).
- During Zoom (or other video conferencing):
  - Consider doing a roll call for large virtual meetings, and if appropriate, go down the list of attendees to give each a chance to contribute.
  - Consider kicking-off meetings during stressful times with a quick ice-breaker….like having everyone use the chat feature to write down their favorite food or place of travel, or what they are looking forward to doing over the weekend.
  - Pick a room with adequate light and appropriate background, or set a “green screen” image behind you by going into Zoom > preferences > virtual background.
  - Remind people to be present for the meeting and limit multi-tasking (ie. emails or texting)
  - Look at the camera as often as you can (as opposed to the screen) to allow for better eye contact with your meeting participants.
  - Be aware of visual cues, such as raising a hand or people speaking while they are on mute.
  - Be sure to schedule and encourage breaks, as appropriate, stand up and stretch as needed.
  - Prior to moving to the next agenda item, check-in with the group to confirm agreement/understanding and action items.
  - If there is a lot of conversation on a topic but no resolution, listen to all opinions and then make a decision for the group. Course corrections can always be made later.
- Ensure everyone is aware of contingency plans in case the call is disconnected or another technical disruption is experienced.
- Read: Stanford: Make the Most of your Virtual Communications

Post-Meeting Follow Up

One of the most important parts of a meeting, and often the most forgotten, is the follow-up. Take the time to record meeting notes, especially action items, and share them with attendees.

- A best practice is to share meeting notes with staff within 24 hours of the meeting (including those who were unable to attend).
- Encourage participants to share feedback, comments, questions, and ideas after the meeting.