



leading wellbeing in uncertainty

tip sheet for people managers

Facing the reality of long-term remote working and continued uncertainty naturally inspires a wide range of emotional responses in people. How individuals respond to their emotions is reflected in their behaviours and affects how employees perform at work. Not everyone feels comfortable sharing emotions openly with managers and colleagues.

Leaders and managers can observe behaviours in themselves and their teams and take proactive steps to support wellbeing and increased resilience. This tip guide is designed to support people managers to know what indicators to look for and how to respond to improve employee wellbeing.

indicators your people may be struggling

There are many indicators that someone in your team may be struggling. The more you know your staff, the easier it will be to notice shifts in their behaviour early. Some of these indicators include:

- A vocal team member is quieter than usual or a quieter team member is more vocal.
- They stop attending optional team building activities, or don't participate fully during these.
- They stop using video during virtual meetings.
- Their appearance seems 'less polished' (noting that we're often more casual when working remotely).
- Team members turn up unusually late to meetings or don't meet project timelines.
- Someone indicates to you that they, or someone in your team, is struggling.
- Peoples' habits seem to be unhealthier than usual – they may talk more about drinking, eating junk food, smoking, etc.
- A team member doesn't seem to be able to focus or make decisions as easily as they usually would.
- Staff take more sick days than usual and don't engage in learning or professional development opportunities.
- You hear overly negative, fault-finding language and criticism.
- The quality of their work has slipped or they make more mistakes than usual.

Leadership can be challenging

If you're personally struggling, or not as productive as you normally are, it's very natural to feel this way. There is help all around. You may like to connect with a friend, your manager, your EAP or a qualified medical practitioner.

practical tips to get you started

- Have you called a team member this week for a general check-in, rather than to talk about work?
- Have you sent any emails between 6pm and 6am weekdays or on weekends recently? Your team needs a break. So, if you do have to work out of business hours, draft the email, get it ready, then press send at a more reasonable hour.
- Have you set clear goals and communicated regularly? This can help create certainty. Uncertainty can undermine our wellbeing. So, try and create as much certainty as possible when there's a lot of change happening.
- Are there any meetings this week that could be turned into walking meetings? If not, can you encourage your team to stand up during virtual meetings? Moving our bodies lifts our energy!
- Have you asked each of your team how you can support their wellbeing? We're all different. What wellbeing means to you may be different from your team members.
- Start every meeting with the WWW – What's Working Well? Our brains naturally focus on the negative things in our workplaces and our lives. Starting every meeting with the WWW creates new habits that are more likely to instil creative, positive and innovative thinking.

leadership starts with self

- Have you put time in your diary for self-care today? Yes, you! Science suggests our emotions are contagious, so as a leader, it's imperative you prioritise your own health and wellbeing. This ensures you're operating at your best and you're able to navigate the challenges you face during the day.
- Have you had fun and laughed today? Research suggests that having fun and experiencing positive emotions improves team connection, resilience and even our physical health.
- Are you being a positive role model and setting boundaries? e.g. Are you finishing work at a 'reasonable time'? Eating your lunch away from your desk? Or going for a walk around the block to get fresh air during the day? These breaks are key for good cognition (brain function, decision making, regulating our emotions, etc). It's a great idea to promote that you're doing this to your team members, so they know it's OK for them to do it too.

Employees with high levels of wellbeing are 6 x more engaged, 29% more productive, 45% more satisfied and 46% less likely to have unhealthy days. They also tend to be 3.5 x more creative and innovative.

The Wellbeing Lab 2018

wellbeing
matters

reflect on your leadership style

- Does your team have autonomy? Do they get to make choices about how and when they do their work? One of our basic human needs, as suggested in the Self-Determination Theory, is autonomy; feeling like we are in control and we have the power to choice. Feeling like we're in control develops a sense of certainty, which is essential during the uncertain times we are experiencing right now.
- This week, did you direct your staff, or did you take a coaching approach and ask questions? Taking a coaching approach has been shown to improve employee engagement.
- When was the last time you did an act of kindness? Why not take the time to do an act of kindness for each team member, something that's thoughtful that they will appreciate.
- Are you listening more than you're speaking? Are you 'truly present' in meetings? We can tell when someone is pre-occupied. Being present can help staff feel connected and heard.
- Are your team members playing to their strengths? If you don't know what their strengths are, we recommend taking the free VIA Character Strengths Survey and discussing how you can all do more of what you're great at. Our strengths supercharge our performance.
- Have you praised someone this week or expressed your gratitude towards them? Research suggests high-performing teams have approximately 3 positive interactions to every 1 negative interaction. Giving praise and expressing gratitude is a great way to build this ratio in your team.

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