LEADERSHIP!

HARC's Guide on How to Lead During a Pandemic

Leadership can be defined as the act of underlying guiding individuals or groups of people to reach a common goal. There are different leadership styles and attributes. It is necessary to understand what works best for each of us in order to effectively achieve our company's strategic goals.

### LEADERSHIP DURING COVID-19

TYPES OF LEADERSHIP

Two Leadership Styles:
1. Transactional Leadership: Relies on "trades" between leaders and followers through rewards and punishments to improve performance.[1]
2. Transformational Leadership: Concentrates on the growth and development of followers to "transform" people in organizations.[1]

FLEXIBILITY

COVID-19 is evolving on a daily basis, which affects the way leaders must make decisions to adjust accordingly. Therefore, with the fast rate in which things change, it is important to remain flexible and open to new ideas.[2] Adjust staffing procedures and schedules where possible.[3] For instance, perhaps you can allow those who work from home to work non-9-to-5 hours (if that works for your organization) if that works for them.

Being a flexible leader also sets an example for others and promotes collaboration to reduce workload. Our research assistant, Amairani, appreciates that the HARC team assesses workload weekly. This allows staff to support each other if one is feeling overwhelmed and take tasks off each other's plate.
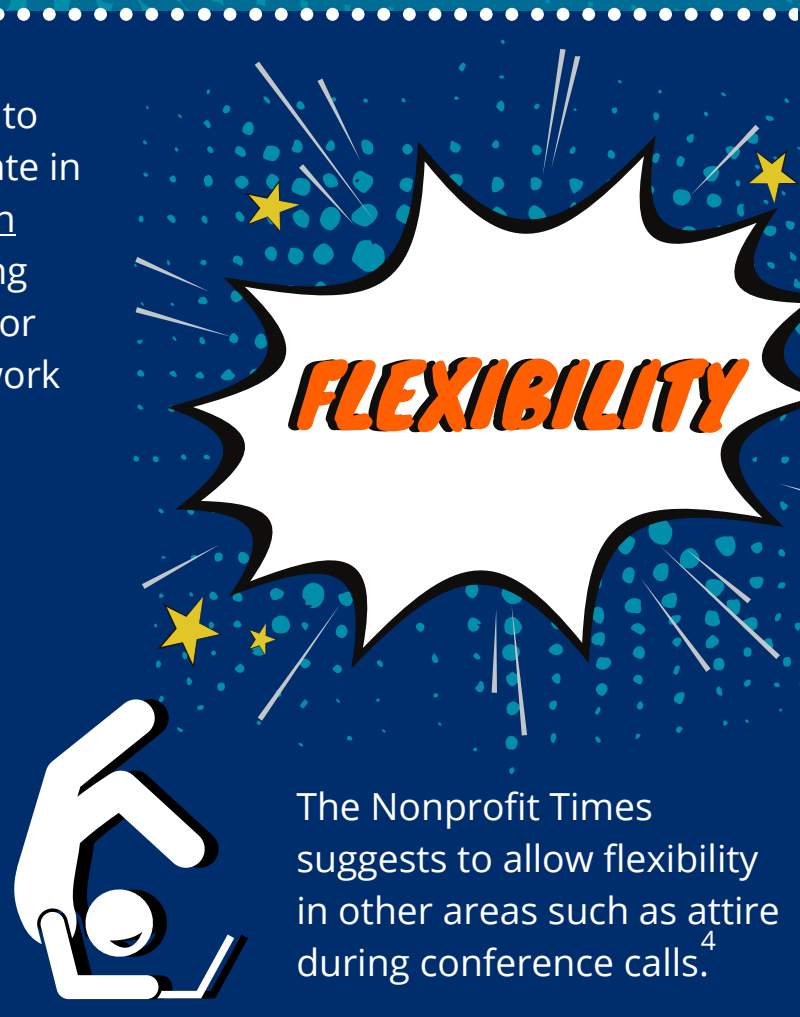
The Nonprofit Times suggests to allow flexibility in other areas such as attire during conference calls.[4]

COMMUNICATION

Communication is an important attribute of leadership. Encourage staff to talk about their concerns and keep communication lines open.[2] Ensure that everyone feels that they are being heard. If your organization has shifted to work remotely, it is a good idea to provide regular online meetings or forums to update staff.

HARC makes sure to have a Zoom call every week for our staff meeting so we get to see each other. We make sure to start the call off talking about our personal lives and challenges before we move on to talking about work.
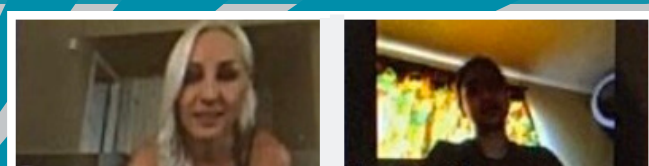
HARC's Director of Research, Dr. Leier, meets with new staff member Amairani via Zoom to do one-on-one check-ins and make sure she is adjusting well despite work-from-home orders.

TRANSPARENCY

Be open and transparent with staff about the situation. It is okay to not know all the answers. Being transparent invites staff for their suggestions for solutions.[5]

Our CEO, Dr. LeComte-Hinely advises to not only tell your employees what you're doing but also explain why. It will help them understand and feel comfortable with orders, even if they don't agree with them.

EMPATHY

Show empathy to staff members. COVID-19 brought upon many of us stress and uncertainty that may not be immediately noticed in an organization. Therefore, acknowledge others' emotions and concerns as we cope with this.[3]

Our Director of Research and Evaluation, Dr. Leier, finds it fundamental to try and check-in on everyone. She believes that asking about everyone's happiness is just as important as the quantity of work they're producing.

Our CEO likes to make cards in her spare time to show her empathy to staff members. It is a stressful and anxiety-driven time for all of us, but her cards let her team know that although we are apart, we are still together. Here are the cards she mailed to each of the staff members to make sure they feel connected and appreciated.

JOB CONTROL

The pandemic is a very uncertain time and your employees may feel like they have lost control over their lives. Allowing your employees to have more control during this chaotic time may increase productivity and reduce stress. In fact, research studies have found that jobs with the highest stress levels are those with high demand and low control.[6]

Studies suggest job demands lead to reduced work engagement, increased emotional exhaustion, and health problems.[7] Allowing employees more autonomy over their work may lead to positive outcomes such as innovation, low degree of detachment to work, and increased work engagement.

Sources

1. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Dr_Nanjundeswaraswamy/publication/272509462_Leadership_styles/links/5b5e8707458515c4b25226d6/Leadership-styles.pdf
2. https://www.harvardbusiness.org/leading-through-uncertainty/
3. https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/public-health/managing-mental-health-during-covid-19
4. https://www.thenonprofittimes.com/hr/irregular-staff-pulse-easy-to-palpate-when-its-health-and-well-being/
5. https://www.harvardbusiness.org/ld-professionals-can-lead-through-the-pandemic/
6. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/231585780_The_Very_Best_of_the_Millennium_Longitudinal_Research_and_the_Demand-Control-Support_Model
7. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/222627071_Job_stressors_emotional_exhaustion_and_need_for_recovery_A_multi-source_study_on_the_benefits_of_psychological_detachment

For more resources, visit: HARCdata.org/covid-19