Maintaining Accountability and Communication as a Manager During COVID-19

Use this time as your opportunity to work on management skills and building trust with your team!

Some of you may be new to working remotely and asking yourself, “How can I manage a remote team and gauge the work status of my staff?” Here are some quick easy tips to strengthen your management skills and grow the trust with your remote team:

- Work with your team to determine realistic work goals per day/week as needed. Be flexible with each other in accomplishing these goals as things are changing a lot right now.
- Determine in advance how you and your team will communicate while working remotely.
- Be certain everyone on your team knows each other’s work schedule. Stay in touch if work hours need to be adjusted in order to meet demands of dependent care and/or daily living right now. Understand that some staff will have personal responsibilities that interfere with work at times, necessitating them to complete work during non-traditional work hours (evenings and weekends).
- Utilize Outlook Calendar amongst your team so you all can keep track of work status and availability for scheduling meetings.
- Utilize tools such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams to continue to participate in meetings and stay in touch with your team. Test out and practice these technologies with your team. Post COVID-19, these technologies will enable you to be more productive and flexible.
- Try your best respond to email and voice mail as you would as if you were in the office.
- Provide your team with a back-up telephone number should something urgent arise and they cannot reach you on your office number.
- Stay in touch with colleagues throughout the week and check-in with them to see how they are doing. Send them note to say Hi.
- Recognize that telecommuting during a pandemic is not the same as telecommuting in general. There is an increased need for flexibility at this time as many people are managing personal responsibilities ordinarily not on their plate.
- Work with your staff to help them prioritize work that is considered essential. Clarify expectations together to avoid misunderstandings.
- Avoid sitting on performance concerns. Addressing them with staff and reminding them of agreed upon work expectations prevents problems from escalating or morale issues later.
- Reschedule activities that can’t be executed, even imperfectly, virtually. Now is the time to be creative and do the best you can do under the circumstances of COVID-19.
- Fill the newly available time that becomes available with important backburner projects that just never seem to get done. Provide learning opportunities and development for staff to take on something new.
- Check-in with your team regularly and re-prioritize as needed.
- Find creative and fun ways to engage with your team to maintain engagement and morale.