

# 2020 CORONAVIRUS COVID-19



# Leader Communication Toolkit

## Introduction

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As a leader, you are an owner of the communications. Your words, your actions, and your attitude will influence the words, actions, and attitudes of those around you. Our behaviors and our actions, what we expect of our people, and the way they work and act, are critical to our success.

As a leader, you need to be very intentional on focusing on the facts and not feeding into the rumor mill. **Maintaining trust through transparency** is essential for your success and your team's success.

Please review this guide carefully so that you can conduct effective conversations and continue to reinforce the right messages. If you have any questions on the contents of this toolkit, please contact your human resources business partner.

### Quick Tips for Leading through Difficult Times

Your most important job during a difficult time is to **Maintain Trust through Transparency.**

- 1.** Don't allow your emotions to get the best of you.
- 2.** Remain positive to remain productive.
- 3.** Proactively address the "rumor mill" . . . and don't feed the rumor mill. Focus on FACTS!
- 4.** Recognize and acknowledge that questions are normal.
- 5.** Be patient and be empathetic. Recognize and understand that everyone is managing through unknowns.
- 6.** Repeat messages often and share both good and challenging news. Reinforce that information will be shared regularly to ensure transparent communication.

## General Communication Guidelines

### Before sharing information with your associates, remember:

1. Communication takes place with more than words. Your actions during this time also send messages to your associates. Closed doors, avoidance, or lack of words may send unintended messages to your associates.
2. The words you DO use are important. What you say carries a lot of weight: think twice about what and how you say anything.
3. Be open, honest, clear, and concise.
4. Be transparent about what you can and can't share.
5. People will be in different phases of emotion. Meet them where they are in the process and help along the way.
6. If someone has individualized concerns, move to a private conversation.

### Manage Emotional Reactions:

1. Manage your own reactions (you may feel a rush of adrenaline, anger, sympathy, etc.) *and* anticipate how you believe a person will react.
2. Plan for emotional responses and use the following tips:
  - Be comfortable in the discomfort – you may not have all the answers or be able to “fix” anything.
  - Periods of silence are okay; let your empathy show. Help focus individuals on things that they can control.

*IF YOU SENSE THAT AN ASSOCIATE NEEDS EMOTIONAL SUPPORT BEYOND WHAT YOU ARE PROVIDING, IMMEDIATELY CONTACT YOUR NETWORK HR MANAGER, HRBP, OR REFER THE ASSOCIATE TO EAP.*

- **EAP: 1-866-252-4468**

### Best Practices in Managing 1:1 Conversations:

1. Listen and acknowledge concerns and feelings.
  - *“I know you’re anxious. Help me understand what your concerns are”*
2. Redirect associate’s focus on the facts.
  - *“I care about your health and safety. What we know is.....”*
3. Share your perspective.
  - *“This is what we are doing to help ensure you are safe....”*
4. Ask for associate commitment on maintaining focus and helping other associates through any anxiety.
  - *“Do I have your commitment?”*
5. Reemphasize commitment for transparency
  - *“I commit that I will share more information once I have it. Your health and safety are our priority.”*

### Listening Tips:

- Be interested. Avoid distractions and stay engaged.
- Use open ended questions.
  - ✓ *“What questions do you have?”*
- Check for understanding.
  - ✓ *“So what I hear you saying is....”*

## Example Group Communication and Talking Points

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The following talking points provides guidance to GMs, Branch Managers and Supervisors when it is known that someone has been sent home, asked to Self-Quarantine due to COVID 19 Symptoms, or had a possible exposure to COVID-19.

*This just an example of talking points. Every situation may be different. It is important that each people leader makes the communication their own so that it does not sound scripted. Please work with your Network HR Manager or HRBP to help with developing tailored communications*

- “The health of our associates is of our utmost concern”
- “We wanted to get you together to talk about a situation as there are a lot of rumors going on and I want you to hear the facts from me”
- “We have had an associate who has asked been asked to \_\_\_\_\_ due to a possible exposure to COVID 19.”
- “What we know now is that there has been no confirmation that the person he has been exposed to has tested positive and as such, there has been no confirmation if the associate is positive”
- “We will continue to monitor the situation closely and as soon as we have more information, you will hear it from me first”
- “The key is to control what we can control, and that is following the CDC Guidelines of ensuring we are washing our hands, using sanitizer, keeping a good social distance, wiping down equipment.”
- “Let’s be sure we pay special attention to wiping down our equipment.”
- “If there is a need to modify shift schedules, we will let you know as soon as possible.”
- “I would ask that you please respect the associate who is away and respect his/her privacy.”
- “In times like this where there is a lot of uncertainty of misinformation, it is important that we are focused on what we know to be factual and not get caught up in rumors.”
- “Again, I commit to keep you updated. My door is also open if you have any questions.”