



COMMUNICATING YOUR FEELINGS & NEEDS WITH YOUR EMPLOYER

The workplace changes as a result of the pandemic are new to everyone and will continue to evolve. Just like the many changes everyone has adjusted to so far, it will take time and effort to adapt to the ‘new’ work physical environment. Employers want to keep their workforce safe and healthy and they are aware that they should help relate to and support employees in a more empathetic, humanitarian manner. It is up to the employees, however, to ensure they are responsibly communicating with their managers/supervisors so that employers have the opportunity to offer appropriate tools and support.

USE YOUR VOICE

In this new paradigm, people want and have a need to be accepted, heard, and supported. With so much change in such a short period of time, heightened stress and fear are common. Share your voice and your concerns, be part of the conversation in your office, and do so compassionately and respectfully. Employers are more focused on humanitarian concerns than ever before and they want to balance keeping their employees safe and healthy while also keeping the business productive and generating revenue. Share any concerns that are on your mind and if you need help, speak up! Be sure to remain part of the solution by offering suggestions rather than only voicing complaints. This will show that you remain invested in what’s best not only for yourself but for the company, its culture, and your co-workers.

If you have a good idea for a new way of doing things or positive change, share it. Your employer wants to be innovative and responsive to your needs, but they cannot solve for what they don’t know. Group forums or internal committees can be formed to garner collective ideas on how best to manage during this time. When shared, these collective thoughts can benefit the whole company.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO BE VULNERABLE

Your employer is aware that this transition is not one-size-fits-all. They know it is not going to be easy and that there have been and will continue to be numerous stressors for people returning to the physical workspace. Be willing to trust your own instinct and intuition and to share what’s going on within. In return, be willing to listen to others with the same level of empathy and respect that you desire. Vulnerability when it goes both ways can be extremely powerful in building trust and strengthening relationships.

Be cognizant to not take part in venting, gossip and spreading negativity. Vulnerability does not mean dumping one’s negative thoughts, rather it means opening up to share what we *truly* feel. This way you can gain support as well as provide it to others allowing all to feel more seen and heard.

REQUEST A CHECK-IN PERIODICALLY

Communicate clearly and consistently with your manager and your colleagues. If not already scheduled, you may want to request a check-in weekly or bi-weekly to touch base about how you’re dealing with the transition. Yes, this is the workplace, but in this new paradigm you will benefit from being transparent and open about your fears and concerns. This way they don’t fester and you can address your fears sooner. It’s okay to ask for help where you need it, and many times you may find that others are facing the exact fears you are. This can help to also enhance a sense of belonging and commonality amongst you and your co-workers.