

# SUPPORTING WELLBEING TO ENSURE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

Faculty and staff who prioritize their wellbeing amid the significant stressors of the pandemic are more likely to be engaged in the workplace, are better equipped to manage stress, and have a positive outlook. Leaders at the University of Minnesota play a critical role in maximizing both good work and the wellbeing of their faculty and staff.



## **Return to the core values of your mission-aligned work.**

Encourage each colleague to find the purpose and meaning in their roles and responsibilities by connecting it to the essential function of the college, school, unit, and campus. Also advocate for the wellbeing of each employee. Encouraging employees to seek wellness, balance, and fulfillment in all aspects of their life, including in their roles and responsibilities at the University, will help ensure that employees are approaching workplace challenges with good perspective. This helps each staff and faculty member to make a connection between a supportive culture and the success of your college or unit's essential function.

*Employee Engagement dimensions addressed: Commitment and Dedication, Clear and promising direction*



## **When setting expectations and developing goals, strongly encourage participation in wellbeing activities.**

Clearly articulate that COVID fatigue is real and the impacts on physical and mental health are also real. Encourage employees to assess their personal needs and how those could be met. Faculty and staff are often unaware of the University's wellbeing programs, so leaders can offer support by promoting and encouraging participation in the programs that are best suited for them and their situation.

Without a focus on wellbeing, follow-through and overall performance may lag. Employees may feel personally unimportant or neglected, or that their work does not contribute meaningfully. Promoting wellbeing supports an overall culture of engagement and conveys your confidence in employees to do their best in the current circumstances.

*Employee Engagement dimension addressed: Clear Expectations and Feedback and Commitment to Excellence*



Office of Human Resources

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## **Facilitate wellbeing conversations at every level of the University.**

Leaders at all levels of the University should explore ideas on how to enhance wellbeing at work and at home since the boundaries between the two are blurred for many. Your colleagues will have useful feedback about what's working and where there's room to improve. Discuss and create space for all ideas. Document them and search for ways to incorporate them both University-wide and locally on teams. Employees who are supported by these efforts will feel they are part of a bigger wellbeing movement in the face of COVID fatigue. Be sure to address what challenges you have not yet been able to solve so that your colleagues will continue to participate in future opportunities to provide input and feel a sense of psychological safety to do so.

*Employee Engagement dimension addressed: Support and Resources, Collaboration, and Effective Environment*



## **Follow up to show you care.**

If you are not already, be sure to schedule regular check-in meetings with all of your direct reports. These meetings can be 30-60 minutes and they can be used to check on overall wellbeing, discuss progress on work goals, and problem solve to overcome barriers. At these check-ins, be sure to inquire about your colleagues' overall wellbeing, including that of their loved ones. More than ever before, different areas of employees' lives directly impact wellbeing, performance, and engagement.

These regular check-ins as well as your authentic concern will significantly enhance trust, psychological safety, and ultimately the degree to which employees feel you and the University care for them. Your colleagues' work efforts are only enhanced by these positive interactions and emotions.

*Employee Engagement dimension addressed: Confidence in Leaders, Respect and Recognition*