

The following thoughts and resources are to assist and support you as you build the (hopefully short to medium-term) new normal.

- ✓ **Overcommunicate what is happening internally** (operations, talent processes, emergency procedures, processes being developed) **and externally** (grantmaking, programs, constituency-facing work, partnerships, etc.) – doing a quick communication once a day is not overkill and builds connection.
- ✓ It's **ok to say you don't know or that things are undecided**, if that is the case – but ensure you share what/if things are in progress and/or when you expect to have decisions or status updates.
- ✓ If you are creating new internal policies or revising existing policies (i.e. leave, telecommuting, etc.) **communicate whether it is temporary or ongoing**; if temporary, **consider implications and precedents** for your regular policies after this period.
- ✓ To ensure people are free to take care of themselves and loved ones, you may want to **consider allowing any sick or family care leave right now to be in addition to, or outside of your sick leave policy**. Keep in mind that your sick leave policies may be affected by the passing of [H.R. 6201: The Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), which applies to all employers with fewer than 500 employees.
- ✓ If you have other policy or process decisions (internal or external), **consider using [Race Matters' Racial Equity Impact Analysis](#) to inform and assess your decision-making** to ensure that your equity and inclusion focus continues to be centered during this time of rapid decision-making and fluidity.
- ✓ **Remote Work and Possible Isolation:**
  - Since team members cannot see you as they might normally (e.g. in hallways, meetings, etc.), consider how to **have visibility** to your team via: multiple messages on Slack (or your platform of choice), emails, group texts, etc. This is a great chance for leaders to be a **calming and uniting presence** – through consistency and visibility.
  - For many, this is the first time they have had extended periods of telecommuting and being somewhat isolated – **consider ways to keep connection**. In addition to regular meetings, create watercooler opportunities by having ongoing stated **informal drop-in times** where people can virtually eat lunch or have coffee together. Or build a communication norm that beckons colleagues to gather if they are interested and available. (i.e. “Who’s around?” or “Break time”)
  - **Create rituals** that acknowledge this time of virtual work, create connection, and reinforce the organization mission – things like start-of-day or end-of-day quick takes, topical discussions, mission-based story-telling, etc.
  - **Have book/show/movie/podcast groups** in which people watch, listen, or read on their own and **come together to discuss**. Focus can be either work-related (as a form of professional development) or not (to provide a break). Ensure the chosen books/shows/movies choices come from team members. And remember that some entertainment may seem too fraught (due to controversial or NSFW portions), so tread carefully and share any caveats needed.
  - Consider having **team members “buddy” up** – so that everyone has someone with whom they check in – at least once a day or at beginning and end of day – especially for those in more isolating jobs
  - Take time or set up time to **touch base on the more every-day life aspects of being home** – sharing recipes or cooking tips (for some, sustained everyday cooking is new), ways to stay healthy, exercise methods, parent tips, etc.

- ✓ **Remote Work and Possible Isolation:** (continued)
  - **Lean into coaching!** It's portable, requires no additional set-up (beyond a phone), and can be enriching for both coach and coachee. Think about coaching to sustain connection, discuss productivity during tough times, deepen remote management skills, and build leadership. Peer coaching, external coaches, managers as coaches – all will work. If you need tips or thoughts to build your managers' coaching skills, let me know.
  - **Host challenges or round robins** around topics like **moments of inspiration or innovation** (lived, heard, or seen).
  - Consider what **support or subsidy team members might need to maintain their tech connection** (esp. high speed and wireless) as this period gets longer, since everyone does not have the same access or financial capacities. Same goes for those that may live in food deserts – what support or subsidy do they need to maintain health while at home?
  - Consider also what **support those team members need that have physical challenges** that may affect their ability to use video or audio equipment on an extended basis.
  - Ensure managers ask employees about their experience to understand it, connect, and to shape situations going forward, including:
    - Their current work set-up and if they need anything (if your organization might be able to meet the need)
    - Their experience with remote work
    - Challenges they are facing
    - How meetings are working for them
    - How connected they feel and what is/is not helping
    - Level and quality of information flow
  - Managers should share info collected with leaders and communicate back what the organization can and will do going forward, based on the feedback. Leaders and HR should collect this info and look for themes to shape short-term culture.
- ✓ **Don't let participation fall by the wayside** – many of you have staff groups or committees to attend to culture, events, equity and inclusion, or other specific issues. Keep those groups involved and empower them to support the creation and sustenance of ongoing connection while remote.
- ✓ As part of this very fluid time, also **make clear which discussions and decisions may not be participative and why.**
- ✓ **Encourage self-care** – integrated and balanced with a bigger picture focus.
- ✓ **Direct focus onto the “us” and “we” in this crisis** moment – in times of fear or crisis, we can all revert to thinking in terms of ourselves and immediate communities. This moment is far more about “us” at a global, even species level. Happily this is something our sector is attuned to, but moments of crisis and fear can lead us in a different direction. Remind colleagues (gently) who might be spiraling, to focus on the larger picture – of the moment, the world, and your work.
- ✓ **Mindfulness works** in times of stress and anxiety. Start meetings by breathing together to center towards each other, start a meditation practice (or group), look through pictures of nature, or engage in some breathwork.
- ✓ **Lean into what we do best – share, help, think, support** – these are the times that our sector is depended on and is extraordinary at rising to the occasion. We lead with compassion, solve problems, support communities, share solutions – and we do it by leaning into the strengths of our people.

## SOME CURATED RESOURCES

### GENERAL:

- [Online courses related to the pandemic](#) around health, safety, planning, etc. – free and short (less than 30 minutes)
- [Network for Good's COVID-19 site](#)
- [National Council of Nonprofits COVID-19 Resource Page](#)

### STRESS AND ANXIETY:

- Various ways of [dealing with the anxiety](#) stemming from COVID-19
- ["11 Tips for Staying Calm During the Time of the Coronavirus"](#) - by Gretchen Rubin

### MINDFULNESS:

- [Corona virus sanity guide](#) (from the folks at the Ten Percent Happier meditation app)
- [Mindfulness and EQ practices for Difficult Times](#) (from Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute)

### WORKING REMOTELY:

- Tech companies offering [free remote tools](#)
- Tips on running [effective online meetings](#)
- [Tips for parents working remotely](#) (from the Poynter Institute)

### LEADERSHIP IN CRISIS OR TROUBLED TIMES:

- Bridgespan article about [Managing in Tough Times](#)
- [Leading Your Organization during the Coronavirus crisis](#) (HBR – item #5 is especially noteworthy)

### HR POLICIES

- [H.R. 6201: The Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)
- [H.R. 6201 and Emergency FMLA](#)
- [Pandemic and Americans with Disabilities Act](#) (ADA) issues
- [Employer checklist](#) around Coronavirus Issues