

Manager's Guide to Supporting Your Work Team

Your work group has experienced a difficult event or have become aware of troubling news. As a manager, how can you support your team through this period? Finding the “right words” to address your group isn’t as important as taking the time to listen and simply be present. Take note not to ignore or avoid your employees’ emotions and thoughts. Rather, gauge reactions of the team as a whole, as well as that of each individual. Take stock to note if responses change over time. Everyone responds to difficult situations differently. However, some common emotional and behavioral reactions include:

- **Shock or numbness**
- **Withdrawal from others**
- **Sadness, crying episodes**
- **Anger**
- **Confusion**
- **Feeling helpless**
- **Agitation or irritability**
- **Difficulty concentrating**
- **Forgetfulness**
- **Increased communication with others**

Ways to Support

- ◇ **Be available.** Use walk-throughs to check-in with individuals and directly ask how they are doing and what is needed. This demonstrates concern and builds trust.
- ◇ **Communicate.** Provide as much information as possible and appropriate. If there are unknowns, explain when information will be available. This avoids undue rumors and speculation.
- ◇ **Available resources.** Provide information on resources, such as the City of Milwaukee’s EAP program , Workforce Health, and United Health Care.
- ◇ **Encourage healthy self-care.** Remind individuals to rest and eat right.
- ◇ **Care for yourself.** You will only be as useful to others as your own self-care. Set time aside for healthy, anti-stress activities.
- ◇ **Consult.** Use supports such as your own manager/supervisor, HR, and the EAP for guidance and suggestions

Employee Assistance Program



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