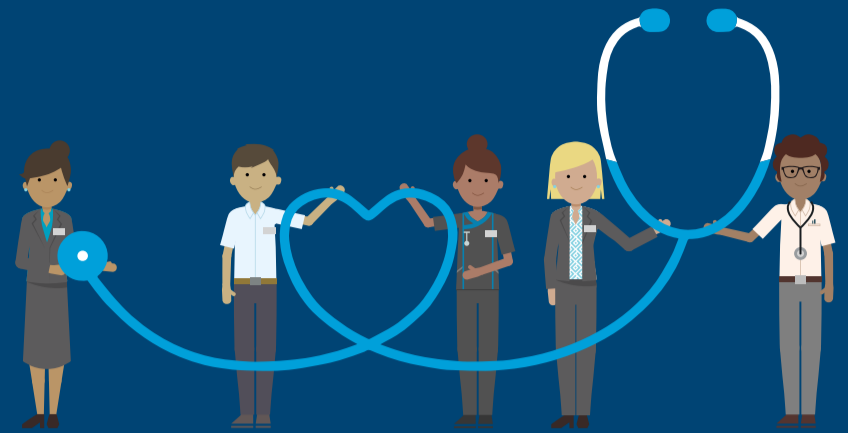


MANAGING PERFORMANCE GUIDELINE



TOOLKIT FOR LINE MANAGERS



A GUIDANCE TOOL FOR LINE MANAGERS WHO LEAD PERFORMANCE DISCUSSIONS DURING COVID-19

TOOL

During a time of crisis, it can be difficult to operate a business as usual. COVID-19 has forced us to focus on new and different goals, priorities and standards; people are working beyond the scope of their usual roles or have been deployed to other areas and job roles. Because we are not working the same way as we did before we can also not expect to manage performance the same as before.

To determine the best way to manage performance in turbulent times we need to be reminded about the real purpose and value of performance management:

- Performance management creates alignment and a shared understanding of what has to be achieved and what individuals have to do, learn and develop.
- Because priorities, standards, expectations and even roles have shifted during the crisis, employees may not be completely sure how well they are performing against these new standards. Providing feedback on their performance encourages them to continue to do their best, and help them see where they can make small shifts in their behaviour to perform better.
- Interactions about performance help line managers determine where employees excel, where they struggle, and what additional resources and support may be needed.
- Proper individual performance management will help individuals remain focused, productive and moving forward through this challenging time.



TIP

WHAT TO MEASURE

- Clarify, discuss and agree on previous goals and priorities. Previous goals, priorities and performance standards have shifted from pre-COVID-19 times and new ones have been introduced.
- Also, be clear about what has **not** changed. The pandemic cannot be used as an excuse to underperform in areas where normal performance is possible.
- Acknowledge that some employees took on additional duties outside their normal responsibilities and some have been deployed to other areas or roles; consider how this transition could have disrupted their normal performance.
- Understand that hiccups and disruptions are inevitable during a crisis. This pandemic is unprecedented and work could not be carried out as planned. Don't be too critical of your staff, rather recognise their attempts and how much they have learnt and grown through mistakes and challenges.
- Pay particular attention to essential skills that have added value to the unit or team, such as:
 - **Adaptability** to new processes, new units, working hours, working from home, new or different home and caregiving responsibilities, etc.
 - **Learning:** The amount of new and different information they have had to digest and master and how well they are implementing these learnings.
 - **Resilience:** Their ability to remain positive and motivated even when things did not go well; taking note that short periods of low motivation or reduced morale is normal during crisis times.
 - **Teamwork:** Willingness to help others without being asked; showing empathy and support to team members



TIP

HOW AND WHEN TO MEASURE

- Long one-on-one conversations may not be practical or feasible, so find a way to check in more regularly for shorter periods.
- Plan and set aside time specifically for these performance check-ins otherwise it will likely be they may be overlooked among your other priorities.
- Create a simple structure to give feedback, list the agreed-upon objectives and talk through them briefly; the structure will help you keep the sessions short.

- Prepare for the conversations by identifying examples of strengths and development areas related to the objectives; on-the-fly feedback is not always well thought through and may feel unauthentic or unfair.
- Where possible, try to find a way to also identify and address learning and development opportunities.
- You can check in as a group but this should not replace one-on-one check-ins.
- Command-style performance reviews will not work; compassion, **empathy**, understanding and gratitude for what the employee has already achieved or tried will give employees the much-needed encouragement to continue to try their best.



PERFORMANCE CONVERSATION STARTERS

SIX PERFORMANCE QUESTIONS FOR TURBULENT TIMES

1

What work accomplishment(s) are you most proud of? What have you learnt about yourself during this time?

This period could have been particularly difficult for your employees. Help them see that getting through a tough time can be an accomplishment in itself.

2

What did you enjoy most?

Having insight into what an employee enjoyed can indicate times of high engagement, highlight strengths and/or areas of interest.

3

What did you struggle with most?

Being aware of areas an employee struggled with may highlight development areas, or provide an opportunity to acknowledge efforts.

4

What are your most important goals right now?

This will help you gain insight into employees' self-awareness and provide an opportunity for you to help them prioritise what is most important for them to focus on right now. It is also important to balance the aspects which are already going well with areas that need improvement.

5

What support and resources do you need to support your work right now?

This could be broader than support from you. Think creatively — a peer, a subject expert, online learning, etc.

6

Let us put the goals into action. How can we best do that?

Consider an easy way to formalise what you have discussed, for instance, by completing a PDP template so that goals and focus areas can be easily tracked throughout the year.



Click [here](#) to read the Gallup article 'Redefining Success During Times of Change'.

If you need more information or support, please contact your regional Organisational Effectiveness Specialist.