

UCEDD Directors Meeting

January 27th 4-6pm ET

Breakout Room Notes

Breakout Room Topic: Supporting the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of Staff in a Virtual Environment

What You're Seeing:

- Zoom Fatigue
- In environments they can't control, children in background
- Issues with University
- Adjustments to work schedules, some are busier than ever, others have lost work or have shortened hours
- Less engagement/low moral, minimal participation in virtual activities especially if work is conducted in-person but all projects/meetings are virtual
- Hard to supervise without micro-managing, how to be supportive but encourage engagement
- Hard to get to know new staff, lose bonding
- Some are experiencing less stress because of the lack of commuting
- Staff with young children and school-age children at home struggling without childcare
- Staff dealing with family members with COVID or the loss of family members from COVID
- Some are struggling with isolation
- Not enough time in the workday, many meetings
- Anxiety about the vaccine

What You're Doing:

- Start to spot staff that are struggling especially if they are introverted
- Regular/periodic individual check-ins
- Be flexible (Provide time-off, flex work schedules)
- Fun activities
- Themes for zoom meetings (change your screen)

- Weekly or Monthly newsletter to communicate new projects
- Change staff meeting to shared leadership model
- Advocate the needs of staff to University leadership, don't push change back to normal too soon
- Trivia games, more social activities
- Designate certain employees to be essential staff so they can use their workspaces in the University if their home environment would be inefficient
- Encourage people to use technology more efficiently, like Teams, DocuSign (can be difficult)
- Utilize HR team
- Make space in schedule on issue staff are interested in, like anti-racism or trauma-informed care
- Remember birthdays, sending out kudos
- Created fitness challenge for staff

What Next?

- What will the work environment look like after COVID (hybrid?), how to shape it?
- Consider core in-person work days and remote days
- How to maintain sense of community but respect requests for remote work
- Juggling different perspectives on work travel even when once we reach the end of the pandemic
- Remember that things won't return to pre-COVID, use that as an opportunity to be innovative
- Planning move back to the office, especially if there is new staff