

Leading in challenging times – top tips

Communicate: this is needed now more than ever; set up regular check-ins with your team, collectively and individually and stick to them wherever possible. These don't have to be long sessions, little and often is key to maintaining contact, spirit and community. Also create times where you come together and work is not on the agenda.

Role-model the behaviours you want to see in your team: set the right tone and beat. Whatever you do and say, others will notice and follow your lead. Wanting your team to work well during this period starts with you. Demonstrate your skills and values as an emotionally intelligent, calm, rational and human leader.

Trust your people: people are looking for guidance, but they also appreciate being treated like adults. Set clear expectations, provide considered feedback and examples of what good behaviour looks like. Avoid micro-managing your people – checking in is better than checking up.

Build rapport: ask your team members how they are feeling and genuinely **listen** to their response, suspending judgement. Explore further – how well are they eating, sleeping, taking regular breaks? How are they coping with children, or anyone they are caring for? Remind them about all the support and resources available on our [wellbeing hub](#).

Be open and honest: face challenging questions head-on. Be honest and compassionate with your answers. Treat your team and colleagues as adults. Make sure you keep up-to-date with all the communications; we are in a very fluid and fast-changing situation, so you need to keep on top of it. All the firmwide comms can be found in [this archive](#).

Look after yourself: take care of your own physical and mental health so you can take care of others. Leadership can be lonely, especially in the current environment, so ensure you have someone you can turn to if you need support. Take regular breaks, get some fresh air, meditate, exercise, stay hydrated, eat well. Set an example and encourage your team to do the same. Share your approach and encourage others to do likewise.

Set boundaries: switch off so your team feel they can too. Emails from you at odd times can trigger the perception that they should be responding, particularly when people are already worried about the future. If you are working at different times, make this clear to your team and be explicit that you're not expecting an immediate response.

You don't have to have all the answers: where relevant, involving your team in resolving challenges will create greater buy-in and a sense of togetherness. Inclusion leads to innovation. Make use of your internal network; maybe one of your fellow leaders has encountered a similar challenge or at the very least can listen as a peer. As above, keep up with the firmwide comms to stay as informed as you can. Your HRBP is always there to help as well.