

# Offering Encouragement

Sometimes, events within or outside the organization may leave your team shaken. Violent incidents, a natural disaster, stressful economic conditions, and changes at work are all reasons why people may feel uncertain or discouraged.

In these circumstances, it may be difficult to find the right words. While some people can come up with an inspirational speech straight out of the movies, others may be less sure of what to say. If your team needs reassurance, try these tips:

- 1. Consult with Human Resources.** Determine what organizational resources are available to assist those who may be feeling overwhelmed by current events or workplace change. The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can also make suggestions and help you craft your message.
- 2. Determine a format.** Consider the best way to communicate about the situation. If everyone on your team is affected, a team meeting is often the best format. If individual workers are struggling, a casual check-in call or private meeting may make sense. In some instances, an email message to your team, accompanied by a reminder that you are available if individual employees have questions, may be the best way to start the conversation.
- 3. Provide realistic reassurance.** Start the meeting or email by letting your team know that you understand that uncertainty is stressful. Sample language: "This is a difficult situation and we are all feeling the impact."
- 4. Reiterate your team's value.** Remind your team that the work they do is important. When appropriate, look for ways to tie what they do to the larger goal of helping their community. Sample language: "The work you do every day matters not just to the organization, but to our customers and the city we live in as well. Thank you for your efforts."
- 5. Be available.** Tell your team that you are available to discuss the situation in more detail. Sample language: "If you have questions or need more guidance, please speak with me. I'm here to help."
- 6. Remind your team about LifeMatters.** Provide other relevant resources as well. Sample language: "LifeMatters is available 24/7/365 to help you deal with stress and other difficult situations. I urge you to call."
- 7. Listen to your team's concerns.** Be open to suggestions on how to improve morale or make difficult circumstances more manageable. Keep in mind that your role is to help team members stay on track at work. Sample language: "What would you do to improve the situation? I'd appreciate your ideas."
- 8. Follow up.** Check in with your team in the days and weeks following your email or meeting. Continue to take periodic "temperature checks" and monitor your team's mood. Talk to HR about any additional steps you could take, such as training, that might help your team cope with challenges.

The LifeMatters Management Consultation Service is available to support your efforts to maintain team morale. We're here to help. Call 24/7/365.

Call the **LifeMatters®** Management Consultation Service toll-free anytime. **1-800-634-6433**

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