



The Jewish Federations®
OF NORTH AMERICA

Strategies to Support

YOUR STAFF THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

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Tips and Tools for Leaders & Supervisors to Implement Today

As we enter the tenth month of what is perhaps the most difficult period of the global pandemic, with the knowledge that a vaccine is on the way and yet we still have the dark, long months of winter ahead, we know that Covid fatigue is real. We have heard from many leaders that their staff is exhausted, anxious and in need of greater support when it comes to their **health and well-being.**

In response to this need, JFNA has organized some tips and strategies to help leaders and supervisors **better understand, support and recognize their staff** during the next period of this pandemic. JFNA staff is also available to work with leaders to help customize any of these ideas as well as other professional development offerings that you would like to provide for your staff.

Understanding Your Staff

- Have you surveyed your staff to better understand their needs?
- How often are you meeting and communicating with your full staff?
- What is working for your staff?
- How are you holding staff accountable for results?

Have you surveyed your staff to better understand their needs?

UTILIZE LEADING EDGE'S PULSE SURVEY

Utilize Leading Edge's Pulse Survey —A simple and short way to get ongoing feedback on how your employees are experiencing work in the current environment.

ENGAGE WITH LEADING EDGE'S STAFF

Engage with Leading Edge's staff to customize the Pulse Survey, debrief on its findings and implement an action plan based on the survey results.

ENROLL STAFF MEMBERS

Identify and enroll staff members from all departments/levels who have equal voices in sharing and addressing the survey results. Don't be afraid to set boundaries when they are enrolled so that there are clear expectations of what can be achieved.

How often are you meeting and communicating with your full staff?

REVIEW AND ENGAGE

Review how often you are communicating and meeting. Enroll HR professionals or other staff members to give feedback on what they need and how often. Ask people for ideas—engage everyone in thinking about how to continue to deal effectively with this crisis.

GIVE DIFFERENT STAFF A VOICE

Give different staff members a voice in your all-staff meetings in order to empower them. Include an intention/reflection in your meetings that is shared by a staff member who didn't present in a previous meeting.

UTILIZE INTERACTIVE COMPONENTS

Utilize interactive components of virtual gatherings such as the use of “break-out” rooms in Zoom so that staff have time to gather in small groups around open-ended questions that focus on issues that matter to the organization or just to catch up and connect.

HUMAN CONNECTIONS

Light touches and human connections are what staff needs. Here are some [Icebreaker Questions](#) to help engage your teams at the top of meetings.

What is working for your staff?

SMALL GROUP CONVENINGS

Middle managers are carrying a lot right now. To ensure they have a place to voice their needs, **try small group convenings for middle managers with HR staff**. You can authorize HR professionals to give financial allowances and other incentives (perhaps an extra flex personal day) so that they can respond and empower middle managers in real time to meet needs and avoid unproductive vent sessions.

ZOOM/MEETING FREE DAY

Not able to close the office? **Try introducing a Zoom/meeting-free day once a month** to give everyone a day to catch up on work without the pressure of being on Zoom calls!

OPENLY DISCUSS VACATION POLICIES

With nowhere to go, vacation days are going unused and staff is overworked. And don't forget that this goes for senior management as well. Review your vacation policies and share openly the rationale to change or not change any of the policies. **Try giving an extra day off** on a long weekend or closing on Christmas Eve or New Year's Eve so that staff has extra downtime.

ENCOURAGE TO LEARN NEW VIRTUAL TOOLS

Encourage staff to learn new virtual tools that make their online work more engaging. Sign-up for a demonstration with [Mural](#), [Miro](#) or [LucidSpark](#).

How are you holding staff accountable for results?

IDENTIFY SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES

Setting clear short-term objectives for staff members to focus on is critical now but sometimes hard to do virtually. Short-term goals can rally people when the longer term is uncertain. Consider bringing in a digital tool like [Asana](#) or utilizing the [RACI](#) model to help manage and measure short-term accountability and clarify roles and responsibilities for teams.

Strengthening Your Staff

- How are you supporting your staff's mental health and well-being?
- Does your staff have everything they need to be working from home?
- Is your staff seeking out professional development and new opportunities?

How are you supporting your staff's mental health and well-being?

MENTAL HEALTH TOOLS

Consider purchasing access to comprehensive mental health platform/apps like [Modern Health](#), [Lyra Health](#) or [Talk Space](#) for your staff to ensure they can afford these services.

VIRTUAL PLAYTIME

In addition to providing flexible work times for parents with kids at home, encourage working parents to schedule virtual playtime meetings with colleagues who are in similar situations so that they know it is okay to have their kids in the room.

CUSTOMIZE WORKSHOPS

Enroll your HR team or other interested staff members to customize workshops on [positive psychology](#), [mindfulness](#), [gratitude](#) or anything that interests them.

SHARE RESOURCES

Don't forget Microsoft Teams, Slack and other communication systems are great ways to connect parents in your organization to share resources. You can also have employees set up other group chats and give them ways to connect informally with each other around common interests. This is today's version of the watercooler!

THE ISRAEL TRAUMA COALITION

Consider partnering with the [Israel Trauma Coalition](#), which offers emotional support, counseling and training on dealing with the Covid crisis. You may contact JFNA's [Mandel Center](#) staff who will put you in direct contact with them.

Does your staff have everything they need to be working from home?

TECHNOLOGY ONE-ON-ONES

Let people sign-up for one-on-ones with IT to ensure they are using their tech correctly, or schedule optional office hours where IT is available to offer informal tech support.

PHYSICAL THERAPIST

Engage a physical therapist or other consultant to help people find better sitting positions.

MAKE QUICK PHONE CALLS

Sometimes the easiest way to find out how your staff is working is to just ask. Encourage senior management and your HR team to **make quick phone calls to any staff members** they haven't spoken to in a while before the end of the year.

Is your staff seeking out professional development and new opportunities?

LEARNING SOMETHING NEW

Studies demonstrate that learning something new during periods of uncertainty can be grounding and empowering for people. Now more than ever, **online learning opportunities are readily available** with many free or at reduced costs. Check out [JPRO](#) for opportunities geared toward the Jewish world or [Coursera](#) for a more broad approach.

JFNA'S VIRTUAL FEDPRO

Send your staff to JFNA's virtual FedPro in April. This year's theme is all about the health and wellness of organizational professionals. **FedPro will be free and open to all.** More information coming soon.

Celebrating Your Staff

- When was the last time you recognized your staff's hard work?
- Has your staff taken on new responsibilities in the pandemic?
- Are you celebrating the end of the year/holiday season?

When was the last time you recognized your staff's hard work?

ACKNOWLEDGE SUCCESSSES REGULARLY

Commend excellent performance and acknowledge successes on a regular basis. You can do this by **sending a nightly email thanking staff** for their efforts and acknowledging their challenges or giving a shoutout in any community newsletters.

PUBLICLY THANK COLLEAGUES

Leave time during a staff convening for people to call out the hard work of their colleagues and give a public thank you. Try setting up a simple Google form that is sent to staff where they can submit praise for a colleague that is shared via email or read aloud by you.

Has your staff taken on new responsibilities in the pandemic?

PROVIDE STAFF WITH NEW TITLES

Your staff may need new titles to reflect their work. Even if you cannot provide the compensation increases that would normally have come with these title changes, own that with your staff and still celebrate what they have done.

Are you celebrating the end of the year/holiday season?

HOLIDAY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Try creating a holiday planning committee. Maybe your traditional lunch celebration isn't the way to go. Try breaking it up over a few days throughout the month and into the beginning of next year and assigning small groups of staff to plan activities.

VIRTUAL CELEBRATIONS

Even if you do not normally plan something for the holidays, this year is different! Try an online scavenger hunt or other kinds of fun celebrations such as virtual escape rooms.

JFNA is here to support you in any way that we can

We know that these are extremely challenging times. Covid fatigue, Zoom fatigue, working from home fatigue, all of these are real.

JFNA is here to support you in any way that we can.

Please reach out to Jessica.Balboni@JFNA.org for more strategies and/or to help customize any of these ideas for your team, including the option of JFNA providing online workshops and professional development for your staff, as well as helping you access our hub of consultants.