Maintaining Team Morale, Belonging and Connectedness

Facilitated by:

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Introduction Discussion

Please discuss these questions with the people around you:

- *What makes building connection in your team challenging?*
- *How do you help new staff gain a sense of belonging?*

Supervisors Challenges:

- Staff needs, desires and personalities.
- Remote working.
- Constant changes in procedure and policy.
- Production goals, reporting, and staffing.

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Technology Changes How We Lead

"Leaders, especially those who are not used to managing virtual teams, may feel stressed about keeping the team on track. Under these circumstances it is tempting to become exclusively task-focused. To address these challenges, making time for personal interaction is more important than ever."

Heidi K. Gardner and Ivan Matviak https://hbr.org/2020/03/coronavirus-could-force-teams-to-work-remotely

# Defining a New Work Agreement

- Define purpose, processes and environment
- Set guidelines for communication and reporting
- Apply grace

Purpose, Processes and Environment

- What is the main function of your team?

- What does it look like when it is finished?

- What is the environment you want?
  - Open, vulnerable, candid
  - Interconnected, independent, collaborative
  - Flexible, work-life balance, healthy
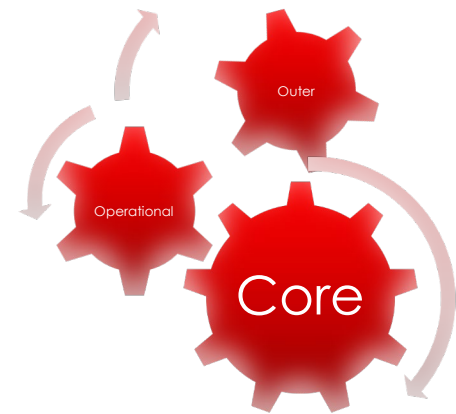
Remote Work Policies

- Working hours
- Team workflow outlining exactly who reports to who (and how/how often)
- What you mean by flexible
- Organizational policies to reflect remote work
- The new structure of the work week in terms of meetings and conferences
- Communication expectations

- https://globalworkplac eanalytics.com/sample -documents/sample- telework-agreement
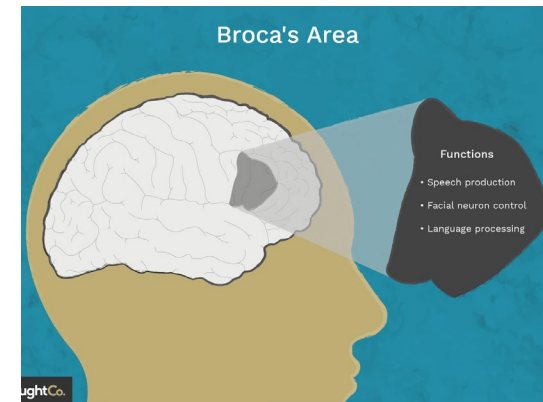
Communication Expectations

- Frequency
- Determine the preferred communication method for each team member:
  - Conference calling
  - Direct calling
  - Text messaging
  - Discussion forums or virtual team rooms
- Options when unavailable

Communication Tips

- Always ask permission to offer coaching and redirect behaviors.

- Ask what you should start, stop and/or continue doing.
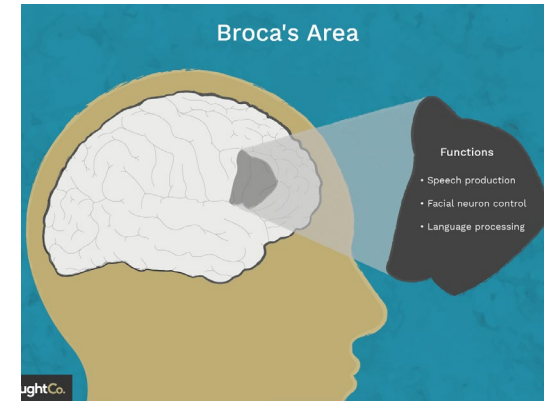
- Consider the needs of introspective team members.

Source: https://www.scienceofpeople.com/virtual-team-communication/

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Consider the Needs of Introspective Team Members

- Pose questions and provide time to answer.
- Use many formats to connect and respond to questions.

Source: https://www.scienceofpeople.com/virtual-team-communication/

Belonging

- A sense of fitting in or feeling like you are an important member of a group.

Self-actualization
desire to become the most that one can be

Esteem
respect, self-esteem, status, recognition, strength, freedom

Love and belonging
friendship, intimacy, family, sense of connection

Safety needs
personal security, employment, resources, health, property

Physiological needs
air, water, food, shelter, sleep, clothing, reproduction

Maslow's hierarchy of needs

Building Connection

- Having a positive relationship with their manager is important to employees. According to Gallup's 2023 State of the American Workplace Report, "manager or management" is one of the 6 most common reasons that employees cite for voluntarily leaving a job.

- *How do new staff establish a relationship with you?*
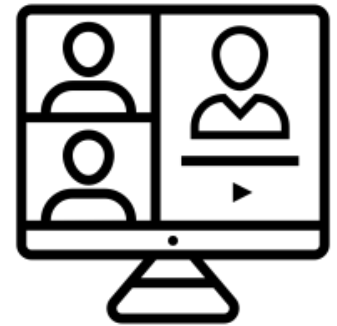
Building Connection

- Have a private communication avenue with guidelines that ensure safety.
- Offer a virtual coffee hour, just to connect.
- Scheduled one on one interactions.
- *"I was thinking about you today."*

https://leadershipmanagement.com.au/one-one-meetings-there-important-team/

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# Ways to Build Trust and Transparency

- Share how decisions are made.
- Be candid when things don't go right.
- Avoid blame, especially when third-parties aren't there to defend themselves.

Responding to Staff Members' Wants

- Ask for a clear presentation of the request.
- Acknowledge the merits of the request.
- Discuss the gap between the request and what you can do.
- Guide the conversation to what is possible.

(E.g., "Can I have two offices?")
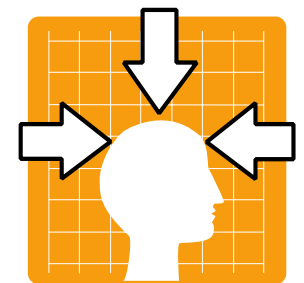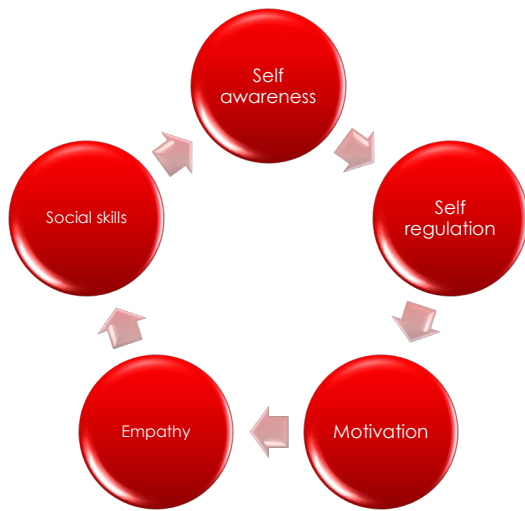
Mix It Up: Ideas to Add Vitality to the Virtual

Find ways to encourage staff to lead, for example:

- Wellness programs
- Case studies/TED Talks
- Profiles and interviews of fellow staff members
- Strangest things you've seen, experienced, and or places you've gone.
- Bring a SME to the meeting on mental health, project management, personal interest/hobby.

Apply Kindness

- Celebrate special events
- Show everyone, including yourself, empathy
- Remind staff of the honorable work they do!

Thank You!

Feel free to contact me at mateffyco@frontiernet.net

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One-on-One Meeting Template

○ How's life outside of work?

○ What are your top priorities this week?

○ What's one recent win and one recent situation you wish you handled differently?

○ Would you like more or less direction from me?

○ Are there any skills that you'd like to acquire in the short term?

○ How do you find working with the team? Is there anything we can do to improve team culture?

○ Are our meetings a good use of your time? What can we do to improve them?

○ Do I give you enough feedback?

○ What's something I should consider changing or start doing?

○ What are your long-term professional goals?

Action Items

☐ What came out of this meeting? What are the next steps?