Best Practices for Managers, Department Chairs, and Leaders

Empathy and consideration for those we manage has never been more important. There is an increased need for managerial emotional intelligence—to lead with compassion, empathy and trust. Incorporating a work-life perspective into your role can lead to better personal and professional integration for those you manage. Learning how to listen and point to helpful and supportive resources for professional, family, and personal needs will result in less stress for all and a more positive work culture.

Start with yourself! The more you seek to create healthy work-life habits in your life, the easier it will be for you to understand and incorporate good practices with those you manage. Identify your work life challenges and take small steps to address them.

Ask yourself these questions: Do I understand the needs of my team? Am I creating a trusting relationship so that employees can come to me openly with their needs? Do I have a sense of the flexibility I might need to exercise to be a compassionate manager and leader? What challenges do I have balancing the work that needs to be done and the work-life needs of the team? As a leader, learn the needs of your team and demonstrate a sensitivity to the complexity of today’s working environment.

Some of your employees may be caregivers of children or adults, struggling to care for themselves, or navigating tight co-working spaces. Be mindful that remote work during a crisis doesn’t look the same as a scheduled telecommuting day. Discuss expectations for work and provide a safe space for your employees to share the challenges they are dealing with. Ask how you can support them as a supervisor and be ready to share NYU resources to help them. Don’t be afraid to shift work expectations and deadlines.

Make Communication a Top Priority
Don’t underestimate the value of over communicating—check-ins work, both for connection and improved workflow. Stay connected by setting up regular individual check-in meetings and team meetings.
Keep in Contact, But Don’t Micromanage
Allow space for your employees to do their work. Let your staff know how and when they can reach you and what your expectations are for response times.

Make Time for Team Time
Schedule time for your team to be together face-to-face—this helps everyone feel connected. Share successes, celebrate milestones (retirements, birthdays, etc.), and don’t be afraid to ask how everyone is doing. We are all going through a tough time and it’s important to acknowledge that and make time for non-work conversations. Consider starting a Community Conversation to encourage camaraderie and connection with colleagues.

Have a Plan for Work Goals
Consider projects that need to be completed and set realistic time frames. Provide ongoing constructive feedback, making sure to acknowledge good work.

Encourage Training Time For Your Team
Set aside time to identify what training your team members need and want, then create a plan for providing time to learn.

Practice and Emphasize Work-Life Integration
Promote self care that addresses mental and physical well-being. Encourage your team to take vacation and personal days. Familiarize yourself with support systems at NYU that you could share in your meetings and other communication, including the offerings of the Work Life office, mental health services through the Employee Assistance Program-Optum and wellbeing programming through LiveSmart.

Be an Example!
Be mindful of your own start and stop times, practice Kinder Emailing by learning how to send your after-hours emails the following work day, take your vacation and personal days, and be kind to yourself and others.