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STEPS TO HELP EMPLOYEES PROCESS DIFFICULT SITUATIONS



THE
GROSSMAN
GROUP

QUICK GUIDE



Intro

When employees struggle to process difficult news, they look to their leaders to respond in some way—both from the top of their organizations as well as from their own manager.

It can be difficult to find the exact right words, but saying **nothing** communicates **something** as well—and can be seen as insensitive.



Tone from^{the} top

SETTING THE TONE FROM THE TOP IS CRITICAL

Leaders and managers have to demonstrate that they care about the emotional well-being of all those impacted by the crisis.

When company operations are impacted and/or people are affected personally by the issue, leaders should go even further to engage employees with critical updates and focus on their well-being.

A ROLE FOR MANAGERS TOO

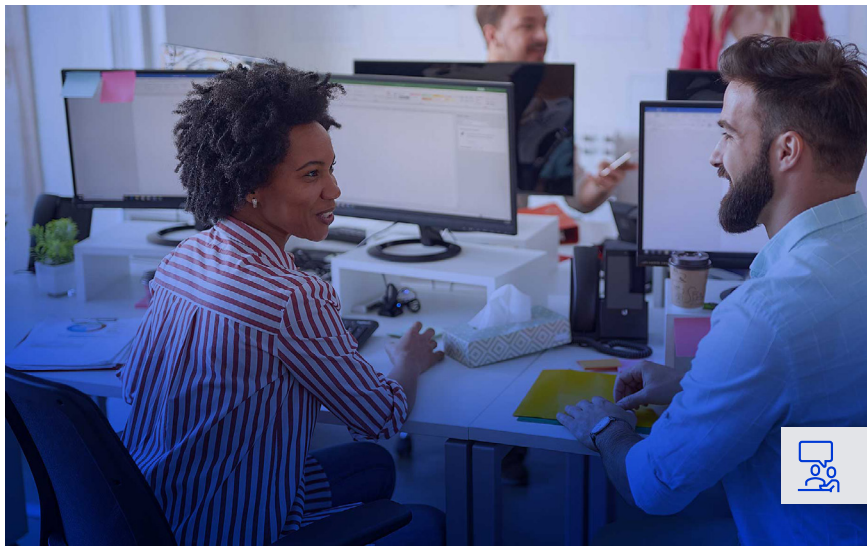
Managers should also create opportunities for 1:1 dialogue with those employees who are affected to provide support and demonstrate that they care. This communication is not about making any sort of political statement, but instead creating a safe and inclusive environment.

As I've shared many times in recent years, I believe leading with a "Heart First" approach—demonstrating empathy, humanity, and authenticity as a leader—is the key to building an exceptional workplace culture. Each new crisis is an opportunity to demonstrate that transformative approach.

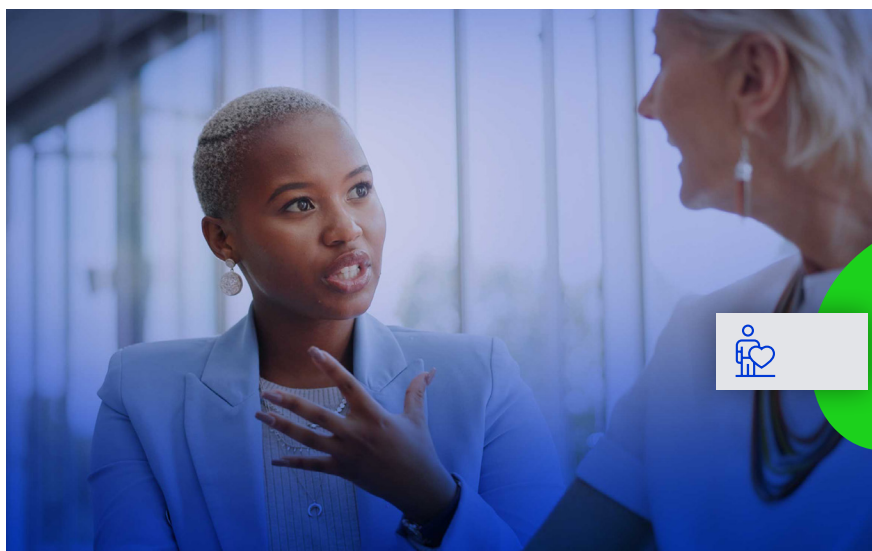
As you review the suggestions that follow, keep in mind that everyone's experience and coping mechanisms can vary, so an individual approach to each person who may be in distress is important.

1

OPEN AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DIALOGUE



You know best who to start with as you prioritize these conversations. Think about who might be most impacted by the crisis, or who might have the strongest feelings. Sometimes just opening up an opportunity for dialogue can go a long way as well. Say, ***“I want to open up some dialogue with you about ____.”***



2

CREATE A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SPACE FOR THEM

Assure your employees that this is a safe space to express any and all emotions, which are valid.

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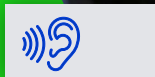
The ultimate measure of a leader is not where they stand in moments of comfort, but where they stand in times of challenge and controversy.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.



3

LISTEN ACTIVELY



— This allows the person to talk in any direction they choose and share their feelings about the crisis. Be present and attentive, showing that you care about their well-being.



4

VALIDATE THEIR EMOTIONS AND BE EMPATHETIC

— Show genuine empathy by acknowledging their feelings and letting them know you understand their perspective. Let them know it is natural to have a range of emotions in difficult situations.

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*Leadership is **not**
about being in charge.
It's about taking
care of those
in your charge.*

SIMON SINEK

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LISTEN MORE



Ask, ***“What else?” “What else are you thinking about here?”*** Help your employee process everything in their heart and head.



PROVIDE REASSURANCE

Offer reassurance that they are not alone and that you are there to support them. Let them know their well-being is a priority for you. Also, this might be the right moment to clearly communicate that ***all*** are welcome at your organization and that your organization does not tolerate religious, racial, or sexual discrimination of any kind.

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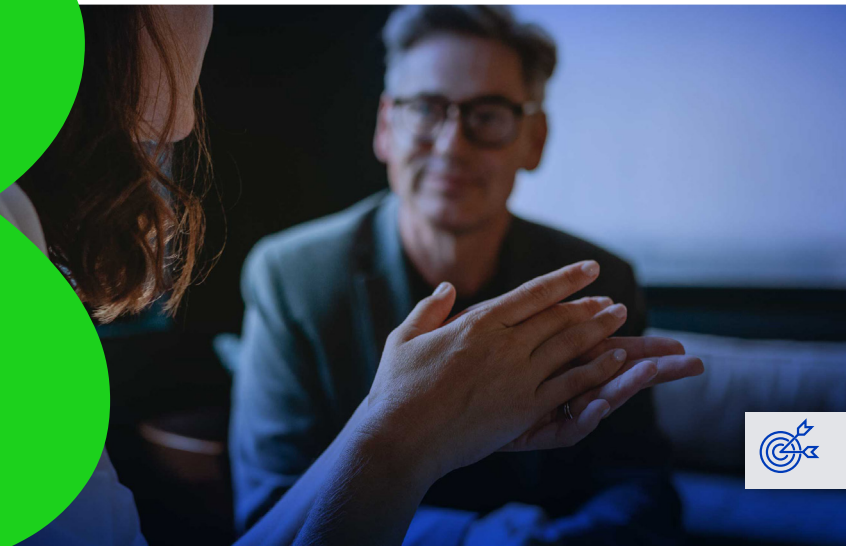


**ASK: “HOW
CAN I BE MOST
HELPFUL TO YOU
RIGHT NOW?”**



- That is one of the most powerful questions you can
- ask as a leader. Be quiet and wait for an answer if
- your employee has one. If not, mention that your
- intention is to help and that they can come back
- to you with an answer when they have one.

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**SHARE INFORMATION
ABOUT RESOURCES
TO HELP THEM**

Make sure to know what support is available in your organization such as the Employee Assistance Program, counseling services or community programs.

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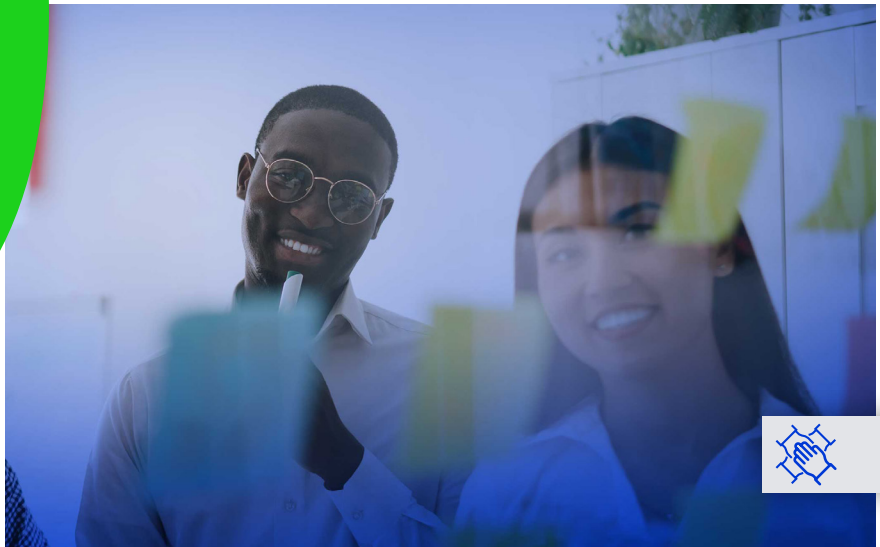
In our post-pandemic world, leaders need to lead with their heart in their head.

DAVID GROSSMAN

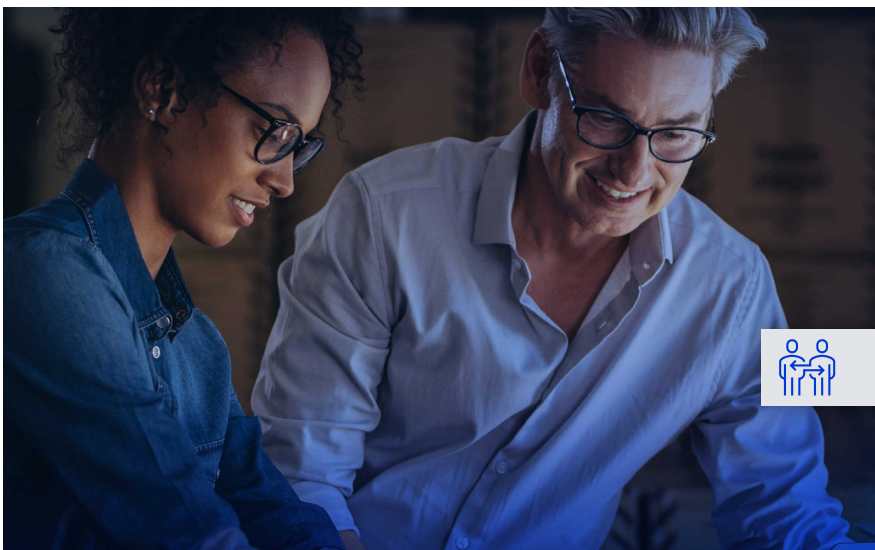


9

COLLABORATE ON A PLAN OF ACTION



Work together to develop a plan to address the situation. Be flexible, if needed. Suggest a different work schedule, if that would be helpful, or a day off for rest, or to just get away. Encourage self-care. Make clear that during challenging times, self-care is critical. Encourage them to engage in activities that promote well-being. Collaborating on a plan will empower the employee and give them a sense of control of the situation.



MAINTAIN REGULAR CHECK-INS



Follow-up and check-in regularly to see how your employee is doing, especially when employees have shared specific concerns. Ask whether they need further assistance. Let them know that you are available for ongoing support.

10

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*Do the best you can
until you know better.
Then when you
know better,
do better.*

MAYA ANGELOU

About us

The Grossman Group is an award-winning communications consulting firm that specializes in internal, leadership, culture, and change communications. Led by founder and CEO David Grossman, The Grossman Group is celebrating more than 20 years of engaging employees and helping leaders lead with heart to drive performance.

Its team of senior **thoughtpartner™** consultants work with companies of diverse sizes and industries to accelerate business through employee engagement and internal and leadership communication. The Grossman Group is a Certified Diverse Supplier through the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce since 2008.

**See what sets
The Grossman Group
apart from other
communications agencies.**

THE GROSSMAN GROUP DIFFERENCE

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THE
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CELEBRATING
20⁺
YEARS

OF ENGAGING EMPLOYEES
AND HELPING LEADERS
LEAD WITH HEART