

Coping with COVID-19 at Work and at Home

Women's Leadership Edge will continue offering tools and support during this unprecedented time. For programming details, connect with us at [questions\[at\]womensleadershipedge.org](mailto:questions[at]womensleadershipedge.org).



Top 5 Takeaways from the Q&A with Mary Cranston & Joan C. Williams

This conversation was led with managers and HR professionals in mind. [Reach out to us](#) if you're interested in joining future conversations with our Women's Leadership Edge team.

1. Now is the time for inclusive leadership.

Research shows that inclusive leadership [enhances workplace performance](#). Revisit what [qualities](#) it takes to be an inclusive leader and use this time to nurture this [critical skill](#). Be transparent as the situation evolves, especially if it affects [job security](#).

2. Use town hall style meetings.

Face challenges head-on by carving out space for conversation. Start with one open meeting for employees to air out their chief concerns, then follow-up with specific resources and meetings to address them. Follow-up meeting ideas: managers trade [telework strategies](#), [parents](#) share homeschooling resources, [elder caregivers](#) talk through how they are managing at home or from a distance.

3. Redefine work productivity expectations and be explicit.

Upper management needs to set the tone, making clear what the organizational priorities are and how employee productivity will be evaluated. Managers should frequently check-in with employees to make sure these expectations are clear, reasonable, and working effectively. Remember: [this is not typical telework](#). For more management strategies, look at our [resources below](#).

4. Don't make assumptions about an employee's home life.

Be open to discussing [caregiving responsibilities](#), personal health (including [mental and emotional wellbeing](#)), and anything else that may arise in an employee's life during this time. Make sure employees taking on additional duties to help caregiving peers are doing so voluntarily and getting support as needed.

5. Open up resources and share them often.

Recirculate your benefits guide and expand it where you can. Can your IT department offer office hours to help you or elderly relatives figure out online grocery shopping? Can your company pay for virtual tutoring services? Think outside of the traditional benefits you've offered in the past. Check out the resources below to help start your own guide or forward this document on to your team.

Quick Links to Resources:

[Telework & Management](#) | [Mental Health & Wellness](#) | [For Parents](#) | [For Elder Care](#)

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Telework & Management

Let's be clear, this is 'crisis' working, you and your team are likely not experiencing a typical work from home day. If your team is new to telework, then it's a good idea to revisit some basics:

- How to Manage Remote Teams from [Inc. & Atlassian](#)
- Tips & Tricks from [Atlassian](#)
- HBR Article: [Why Remote Work Thrives in Some Companies and Fails in Others](#)

Lead by example

- Actively practice [inclusive leadership](#). Catalyst recently launched an [inclusive leadership quiz](#) to help identify where each of us has room to grow.
- For larger teams, consider conducting a [survey](#) outlined by [Culture Amp](#)
- As a manager, [model how you integrate work](#), family, and other personal obligations.
- Define your own boundaries re: work hours, response times, and family obligations. Do your best to stick to them.
- Make new expectations and prioritize what's [important](#). As the situation around COVID-19 evolves, communicate with staff as project timelines and priorities shift. Be clear how you're going to evaluate their work given these changes.
- Use paid time off and sick leave if available and necessary. Communicate to staff that they are allowed to do the same.
- [Interrupt bias](#) in meetings and assignments.
- Revisit how you and your team communicate. Atlassian offers [many resources](#) for teams, including this [guide to improve communication](#).
- To the extent you can, be clear about job security and the potential for lay-offs. Managers have the ability to assuage anxiety and stress by being honest. If you downsize, connect exiting employees with resources for next steps. For example, Californians can use [this new tool](#) for displaced workers. Additional reading: [How to Talk to Your Team When the Future is Uncertain](#)

Use technology

- Know what hours your team is working generally and be sure they know when you are. Working from home doesn't mean being on call 24/7. Your employees may not all be "online" at the same time, lean on technology to help.
- Talk through what platforms work best for your team to avoid lost messages and [promote inclusion](#). (Consider [Trello](#), [Slack](#), [Microsoft Teams](#), [G Suite](#), etc.) Using

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video/audio conferencing and instant messaging can help your team stay in-touch beyond email.

Become a digital village of support

- Create a forum to address employee needs, ask them how you can help, and revisit the conversation regularly. Make sure these meetings are [inclusive](#).
- Encourage your employees to be open about their caregiving responsibilities.
- Don't make assumptions about [caregiving responsibilities](#). Your employees may be caring for children or elderly relatives – or both.
- Be flexible with sick leave and PTO norms.
- Collaborate with your team to reschedule staff meetings so everyone can participate. (Think about nap times, homeschooling hours, etc.)

Mental Health & Wellness

On managing anxiety, stress, and mental health

- Feeling like you might have COVID-19? Use this [CDC Coronavirus Self-Checker](#).
- National Alliance on Mental Illness - [Coping Strategies & Crisis Help Lines](#)
- [Suicide & Crisis Hotlines | More Support Hotlines](#)
- We've outlined resources for dealing with domestic violence [below](#).
- Stress and Coping Resources from the [CDC](#)
- HBR Article: [That Discomfort You're Feeling is Grief](#)
- Chronicle of Higher Ed Article: [Why You Should Ignore All the Coronavirus-Inspired Productivity Pressure](#)
- The Child Mind Institute is offering many [resources](#) for individuals and families looking for coping strategies. Including [Facebook Live chats](#) with clinicians and a [daily newsletter](#) with tips.
- Another resource for families, this [NPR story](#) featuring a coronavirus comic.

Tools for wellness

- Food Safety Tips - [Videos](#) by Dr. Jeffrey VanWingen
- Guide for making your own mask from the [CDC](#)
- Stay moving: [list of at-home activities](#)
- For people navigating a [partnership at home](#).
- Tips for [staying social](#) and [How to Help the Helpers](#).

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- Guided Meditation Playlist by Headspace on [Spotify](#)
- This [article](#) lists popular meditation apps like [Headspace](#) and [Calm](#)
- Many meditation centers are offering free or sliding scale online seminars. If you don't have any regionally, we encourage you to consider these:
 - [Eventbrite](#) shows you new events everyday for all experience levels
 - [East Bay Meditation Center](#)
 - [Spirit Rock](#)

Domestic Violence

- Nobody wants to think they know someone experiencing domestic violence, but on average [nearly 20 people per minute](#) in the U.S. are. Many experts believe social isolation and being homebound are [exacerbating these conditions](#), this has already become apparent on a [global scale](#).
- According to the [National Domestic Hotline](#), here are some unique ways COVID-19 may affect those currently experiencing domestic violence and survivors:
 - *“Abusive partners may withhold necessary items, such as hand sanitizer or disinfectants.*
 - *Abusive partners may share misinformation about the pandemic to control or frighten survivors, or to prevent them from seeking appropriate medical attention if they have symptoms.*
 - *Abusive partners may withhold insurance cards, threaten to cancel insurance, or prevent survivors from seeking medical attention if they need it.*
 - *Programs that serve survivors may be significantly impacted -- shelters may be full or may even stop intakes altogether. Survivors may also fear entering shelter because of being in close quarters with groups of people.*
 - *Survivors who are older or have chronic heart or lung conditions may be at increased risk in public places where they would typically get support, like shelters, counseling centers, or courthouses.*
 - *Travel restrictions may impact a survivor’s escape or safety plan – it may not be safe for them to use public transportation or to fly.*
 - *An abusive partner may feel more justified and escalate their isolation tactics.”*
- [The National Domestic Hotline](#) offers both [telephonic](#) and [live chat](#) options. Their website is also well-equipped with advice on [building a path to safety](#), tools to [identify abuse](#), and much more.
- [The National Deaf Domestic Violence Hotline](#) offers inclusive options like email and video chat.

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For Parents

Our team acknowledges that many of these solutions [may not work](#) for your household, but we hope you'll find something here that helps.

Working from Home with Kids

- **Use teamwork** – if you have other adults at home, tag-teaming can go a long way.
- **Build a routine & clarify your work hours** – let your colleagues know when they can reach you and when you'll be answering emails. Capitalize on nap times, or splitting your schedule, working early or working late.
- **Use your leave if it's available** – many parents are taking a day off a week, or scheduling a half day twice a week. Work with your manager to build a system that is as close to feasible as possible.
- **Let your kids make their [schedule for the day](#)** – Over breakfast, sit down with your kids and plan out their activities for the day.
- **Set up video calls for your kids** – If you have an important call at a certain time, set up a video chat for your kid with their grandma, aunt, uncle, cousin, friend, etc. at the same time.
- **Give your kids a job** - if you have children old enough to help you around the house, take advantage of giving them a purpose. Can they help sanitize door knobs and light switches? Can your eldest lead story time or games for your younger children? You can encourage your little ones to wash their hands by singing to the tune of [Baby Shark](#).
- **Learn from those who have done it before:**
 - This article offers tips and tricks for WFH with kids of all ages: <https://www.poynter.org/business-work/2020/how-to-work-from-home-with-kids-around/>
 - The Child Mind Institute is offering many [resources](#) for individuals and families looking for coping strategies. Including [Facebook Live chats](#) with clinicians and a [daily newsletter](#) with tips.
 - Indeed has also put together a [guide for parents](#).
 - Another resource for families, this [NPR story](#) featuring a coronavirus comic.

Activity Ideas

- Girls Who Code: [Code at Home Kits](#)
- Mo Willems gives [Doodle Lessons](#)
- Online [art classes](#)

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- Cincinnati Zoo [Home Safari](#)
- Monterey Aquarium [Live Aquarium Cam](#)
- More [Virtual Field Trips & Amusement Park Rides](#)
- [Khan Academy](#): A free service providing education guidance and support for multiple subjects, including test prep. For young learners check out [Khan Academy Kids](#).
- [Dreambox](#): Math Lessons (90 day free trial)
- [Duolingo](#): Free language lessons for online, including [English ABCs & Spanish and French](#) available for kids on Apple devices. If your kids are studying another language, use language options on streaming services like Disney+ to help continue exposure to the language while you're at home.
- Story Time from Space: [Astronauts read stories out loud](#)
- Epic!: online [audiobooks](#)
- *Non-screen time options:*
 - Send snail mail to friends and family members
 - Play outside
 - Play school (especially if your child has a sibling)
 - Puzzles, board games, and [madlibs](#).

For Elder Care

- The Family Caregiving Alliance has put together [resources and articles](#).
- HBR Article: [Balancing Work and Care Through the Coronavirus Crisis](#)
- [Tools for Staying Social](#) from AARP
- [The Working Daughter](#) offers [tips](#) for those who have eldercare responsibilities:
- More tips from the [LA](#) and [NY Times](#)

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