Cleveland Clinic
Employee Wellness

Leaders Guide to Managing A Remote Team
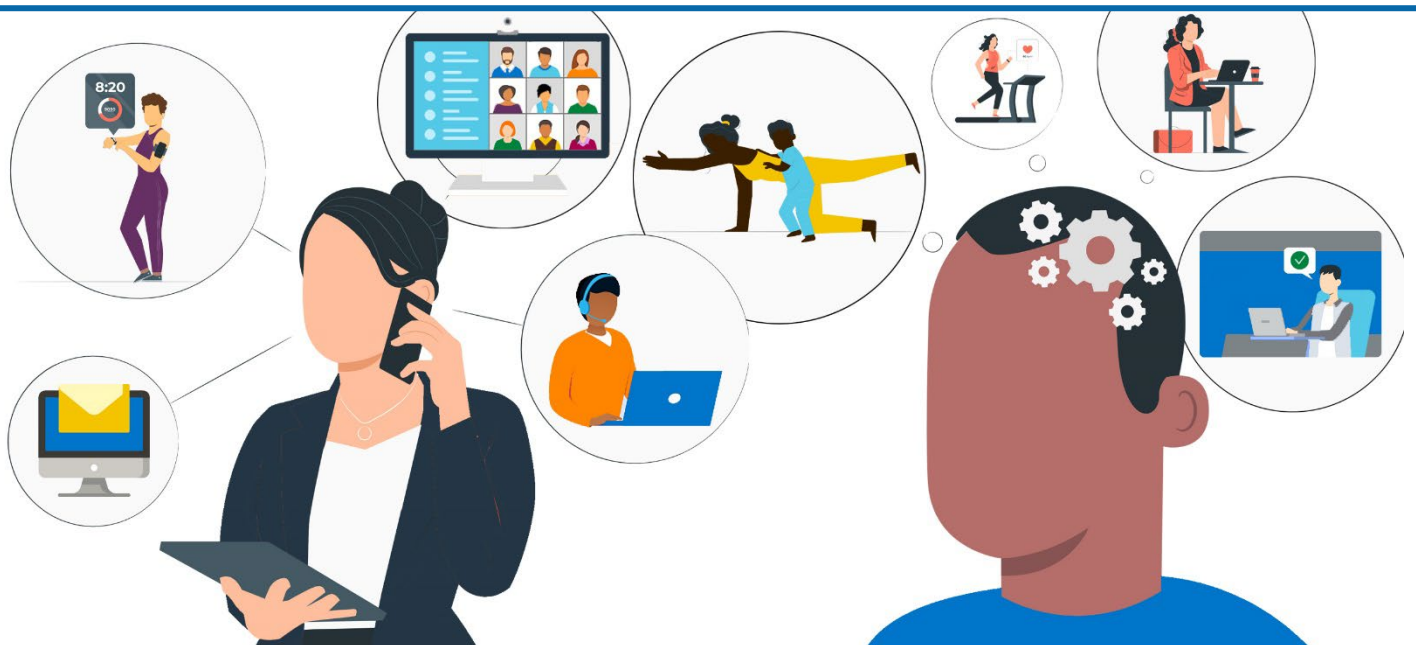
Managing a Remote Team: Getting Started

What Remote Teams Should Expect from Their Leaders

- Communicate clear goals and tasks

- Foster a team culture that supports psychological safety

- Encourage a sense of control

- Connect regularly (virtual rounding) — link caregiver work to mission

- Remove barriers — people, process and technology

- Listen to what your caregivers are saying and ask for clarity often

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What Leaders Should Expect from Their Remote Teams

- Learn about and use resources to improve well-being

- Be accountable – seek goal clarity

- Foster an inclusive culture and Growth Mindset

- Don't be the barrier to change

- Take small steps to building lasting habits

- Start well-being Challenge or Quest

Examples: Tuesday is YOU Day; Steps Challenge

Agreement on Work Cadence and Communication

The most important thing you need to do as a leader of a remote team is to set expectations and gain agreement from your team in three areas. Team members may feel distant from each other not because of the number of physical miles, but rather by the amount of time—the delay—it takes to get an answer from other members of the team. Team members work better together when communication is predictable—not necessarily fast, but predictable.

Set parameters around these 3 areas:

1 What are the normal working hours for the team? When will the workday begin, and when will it end? Will there be periods in the day where everyone on the team will need to be available? Will there be flex time during the day for self-care?

2 How long will it take to get back to each other? If we reach out with a question, should we expect an answer immediately? Within an hour? By the end of the day? And will this change be based on the communication channel? Is it acceptable to respond to internal emails by the end of the work day? Do phone calls from team members warrant a more immediate response?

3 How will team members notify each other when they will be unavailable and unable to meet these expectations (e.g., out at a doctor's appointment)? Will only the supervisor be notified? Do we send a team email? Will the team use a shared calendar?

Schedule Time for Touching Base and Regular Meetings

Here are some suggestions for ways to stay linked to your team, but remember to choose a format that works best for your team dynamic.

Daily 30 minute team meetings held in the morning to touch base and review current projects and tasks.

Weekly one-on-one meetings. For example: "Mondays Are For Meetings" and every direct report has 30-minutes with their manager to maintain communication, ask questions, give ideas, and to review priorities.

A Weekly Action Review with your direct reports should take no longer than 30 minutes. It's an opportunity for everyone to share and sync up on their weekly priorities, opportunities, and data.

End-of-Day Check-in. At the end of each day, every team member shares a list of things they completed that day.

Establish a Video-First Culture
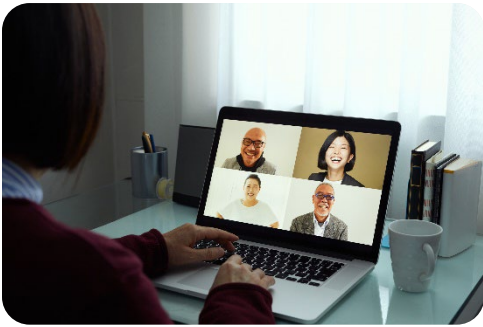
"Video-first" is a communication strategy that places priority on video conferencing tools, as opposed to audio-only conference calls. Whether having a one-on-one meeting or a team meeting, the benefits of video-first practice include:

Ability to use and observe non-verbal communication

Encourages people to participate in meetings from a professional, quiet location (as opposed to just dialing-in-and-muting while driving in the car)

Encourages people to get dressed in the morning!

Keep It Personal

Relationships at work are critical to a high performing team. Forming team chemistry can go a long way to building trust and reducing unproductive conflict. In a traditional office social interaction happens naturally. Long periods of isolation from the team can create stress, bouts of depression and decreased productivity. Here are some practical tips for staying connected and keeping remote teams fun and personal:

- Use the first few minutes of your Monday team meetings to ask about everyone's weekend, or similar personal interest. Have everyone spend 20-30 seconds sharing, "What was the best part of your weekend?" Or, "What's going in your world these days?"

- Create an online area, or group text, where people can share photos of their pets, or from recent vacations, holidays, or other events

- Don't forget to recognize team members for their effort and achievements. Share with the whole team positive feedback from patients, vendors and caregivers.

Consider Personalities

Great leaders individualize their approach to leadership and take the time to truly understand what motivates and challenges each team member.

Some team members may be more social than others and may miss the daily interpersonal connections that happen in an office. Other team members, while needing less social interaction, might struggle with productivity without the structure of the office and may need more follow up. While others that may be self-starters and are comfortable working independently, will make the transition most easily and might be fine with less oversight. Try to adjust your management style to better connect with each team member and bring the most out in what they do best.

How to Keep Remote Employees Engaged & Productive

Don't make assumptions. Don't assume because you know how to use online video conferencing tools like Microsoft Teams, that everyone else in the office knows how to use these tools. If you have a new team member or someone that is not comfortable with the technology then ask a member of the IT team or someone in the office who is a pro at using remote collaboration tools to host a webinar and invite employees to attend. Record the webinar so that people can refer back to it, should they need to do so.

Be flexible. The caregivers that you're allowing to work from home have lives that may not be conducive to working remotely. They might have kids who've been sent home from daycare or school, or a spouse who works remotely. Be less concerned about the hours they work and more concerned about the results.

Check-in with your team regularly. Pick up the phone and ask your team members how they're doing and what you can do to support them. Offer to extend deadlines, if doing so will lessen the stress they're feeling trying to balance your needs and that of their family.

Be generous. Think out of the box to let your team know that you appreciate them. An example would be: after completing a large project, send your team food from Grub Hub or organize a virtual paint and sip event or virtual cooking class to say thank you.

Lead with transparency. No doubt, you'll be asked questions that you either don't know the answer to or are unable to answer. People expect leaders to lead with openness and not withhold information that could help further understanding of the issue. What they don't expect is for leaders to have all the answers. It's okay to say, "I don't know. But I will find the answer." or "I'm unable to provide you with an answer at this point."

Ref: Forbes 2020

Schedule Time for Well-being

Well-being and self-care are important elements for keeping your team happy, engaged and productive. There are many on-line resources and tools that can help (see the Work from Home Wellness Resources page included in this guide). Here are some ideas to help you promote a culture of well-being within your team.

- Encourage your team members to take 30 minutes each day where they can get away from their work areas and go for a walk.

- Show a low impact fitness, stretching or yoga video during a Microsoft Teams meeting and encourage the whole team to participate.

- Play a short guided meditation from the Cleveland Clinic Mindful Moments app or other mindfulness resources during a meeting and encourage everyone to participate.

- Schedule a virtual team "lunch and learn" and invite a wellness content expert to speak or live stream one of the many monthly wellness presentations that are available throughout the enterprise (ex: Wellness Grand Rounds, Wellness Connection, Wellness Insider, etc.)

Be Familiar with Well-being Tools that are Available

Cleveland Clinic offers several Well-being tools and resources for physical activity, stress management and nutrition that can be accessed remotely. You should be familiar with the tools that are available so that you can share the information with your teams. Refer to the wellness resources page in this guide for a list of tools that caregivers can access anytime from any location.

Work from Home Well-being Resources

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

- Fitness On Demand — Caregivers can access videos guiding them on Cardio, Strength, Core and Stretching exercises lead by Cleveland Clinic fitness specialists.

- Refresh On Demand — Caregivers can access videos guiding them in Yoga, Meditation and Breathing lead by certified instructors.

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MINDSET

- Clarity — is a 4-month Cleveland Clinic eCoaching program that focuses on participants' overall emotional health and well-being. Qualifying participants will be paired with a dedicated eCoach whose work is overseen by a licensed clinician. This program is available free of charge to all Cleveland Clinic caregivers.

- Stress Free Now and Go! To Sleep Programs — are 6 week online programs that provide information and techniques to help caregivers better manage stress and get a better nights rest.

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CLEVELAND CLINIC MINDFUL MOMENTS APP — contains a variety of guided breathing and meditation exercises that can be accessed any time.

- ITunes: https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/mindful-moments-by-ccw/id1449898637?mt=8

- Google play: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.ccw.MindfulMoments&hl=en

INTELLECTUAL

- Healthy Habits for Working from Home — for tools to help caregivers keep on the right track when it comes to eating healthy, staying active and keeping productive while working from home.

  https://ccf.jiveon.com/community/employee-wellness

CLEVELAND CLINIC HEALTH ESSENTIALS

- For access to health tips, healthy and tasty recipes and nutrition information.
  https://health.clevelandclinic.org/

  https://health.clevelandclinic.org/?s=recipes

CLEVELAND CLINIC ERGONOMICS PAGE

- Find guidance and recommended products to correctly set up workstations, perform work tasks, and request help to accommodate a disability

  http://portals.ccf.org/occ/Ergonomics

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