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# Remote Work Tips for Leaders

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## Remote Work Tips for Leaders

Our priority is your wellbeing and the wellbeing of your employees. With many higher education employees now working remotely due to COVID-19, here are the 5 top ways for leaders to successfully engage with their remote workers.

### Share Working from Home (WFH) Tips with your team

Share the WFH tips documents designed for those who are working remotely for the first time.

#### 1. Communicate more than ever with your team

Check in with your team members individually every day and ensure you set clear expectations. Consider a daily virtual call to align on priorities, while being mindful that some team members will be juggling family / personal obligations.

Create group chats in Skype, your LMS, or Microsoft Teams to foster group collaboration and mimic informal brainstorming sessions.

Make yourself available on regular communication channels to field questions and help remove roadblocks.

## 2. Focus on your team's well-being

According to the **2019 State of Remote Work report** from Buffer, these are the major challenges with remote work in general (listed from most prevalent to least):

- Unplugging after work
- Loneliness
- Collaborating and/or Communication
- Distractions at home
- Being in a different time zone than teammates
- Staying motivated

The COVID-19 outbreak will likely amplify the stress of these issues, causing significant challenges for your team.

It's important to understand these challenges and empathize with those affected, while also doing your best to inspire success.

Provide your team with the space and freedom they need to juggle challenges during this unprecedented time.

Avoid accidentally micromanaging your team and making them feel untrusted.

Model the importance of taking periodic breaks. Mention to your team that you are taking a coffee or lunch break. Your teams may feel pressure to be available, so proactively convey the importance of taking breaks.

Make time to celebrate achievements as a team. It may require creativity to celebrate in a virtual environment, but it's very important.

Remember to use and make available to your team the **Employee Assistance Program** (EAP). EAP counselors are ready to listen and assist you and your team in this difficult time.

### 3. Follow best practices from seasoned remote leaders

- Make time for small talk. Even if you know your team quite well because you have previously worked in the same office – take the time in your check-ins to ask about things outside of their deliverables and projects. Having a good rapport with your team builds trust and accelerates how quickly you can work through problems when they arise. Consider expanding the duration and frequency of one on ones with your team during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Never cancel a 1-1. This is your opportunity to address two of the top three challenges reported by remote workers (loneliness and lack of collaboration and/or communication). Consider 1-1s with your team to be sacred and never cancel. If you absolutely must – reschedule – but don't cancel.
- Use animated gifs, memes and emoticons to convey emotion. Words alone can come across as more aggressive than we intended. A well-placed emoticon can go a surprisingly long way toward avoiding stress for your team.

### 4. Ask questions to your newly remote workers to help them adjust and to help you understand what drives them.

What's your favorite part about working remote?

What don't you like about working remote?

Do you feel included in our team decisions? Why/why not?

How are the tools we use as a team working out for you remotely?

Which of your coworkers do you wish you had more of a connection with?

How could I better support remote staff?

What are you planning to do to stay connected with the rest of the team and other colleagues at work?

### 5. Be creative and have fun

Take advantage of **Microsoft Teams** and other technology, like your LMS to stay connected in new ways. Brainstorm ideas with your own team and consider these ideas from leaders:

- Add a "Fun" channel in Teams for fun posts. The team can add that funny meme with the big-eyed cartoon that says, "When you find out your normal daily lifestyle is called 'Quarantine'"
- Add a "Nature" channel in Teams and encourage your team to take photos when they go on daily walks.

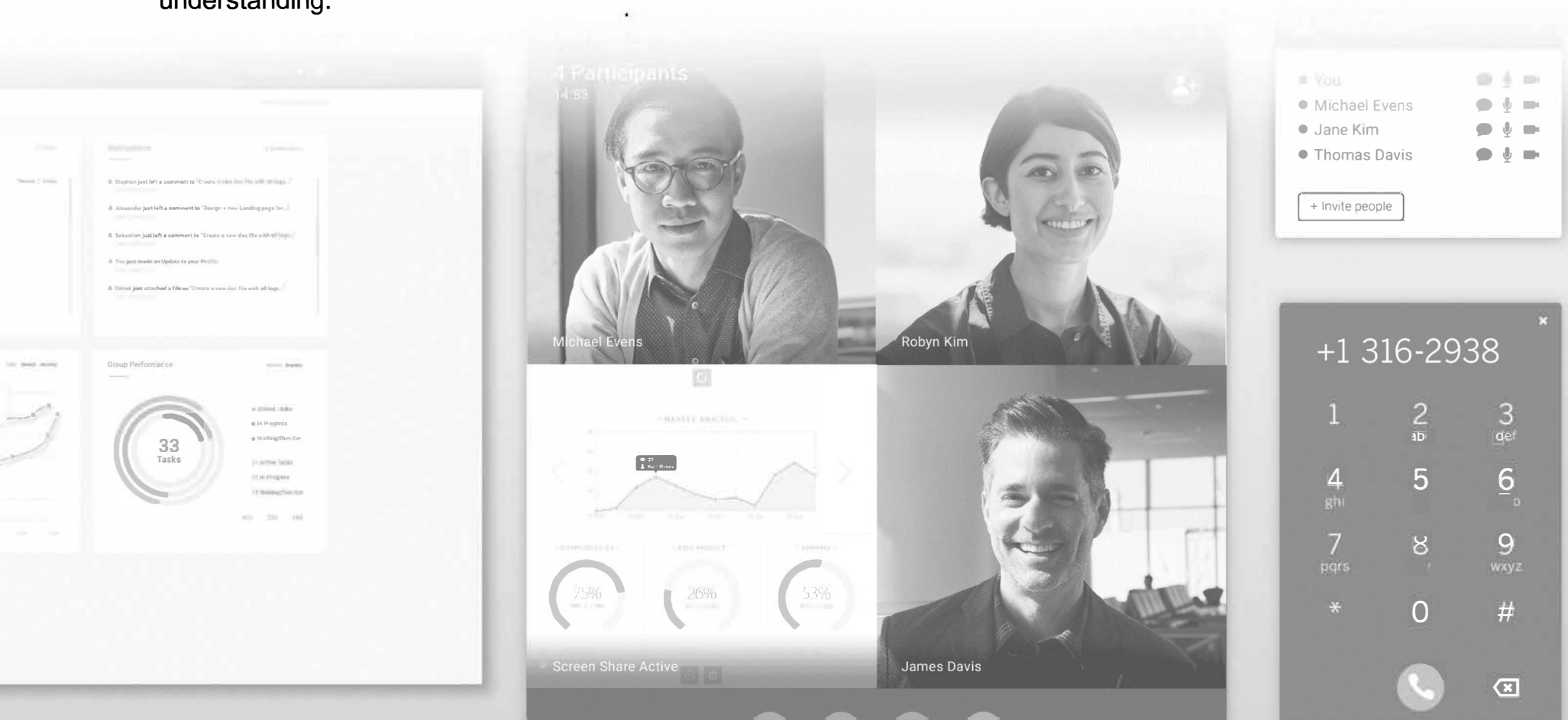
Encourage your team to download the Teams app so it's easy to post while they take walks outside. You can use Microsoft Teams on the iOS, Android and Windows Phone mobile platforms. **Links to Microsoft:**

- **[Participate in a meeting from the Teams mobile app](#)**
- **[Download the mobile app for Teams](#)**
- **[Setup your Teams mobile app](#)**

- Reinforce communication on the importance of regular and longer handwashing and maintaining a physical distance of 6 feet from others and iself-solation if you feel unwell.
- Encourage open communication to ensure employees can speak up if they feel unsafe.
- Continue to observe the self-quarantine guidelines of the relevant government or health authority.

Just as you are concerned about the health and wellbeing of your team, encourage faculty to treat students with the same care and gentleness. Many students are learning remotely for the first time, and are dealing with work and family disruption and stress and need our support and understanding.

# Encourage employees to take care of themselves





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