The Organizational Development & Engagement (ODE) area of Human Resources provides learning and development opportunities to promote employee engagement. ODE staff aim to help create a productive and successful organization that uses best practices to attract, develop and retain employees.

**Upcoming Live Sessions via Zoom**

There is no time like the present to participate in professional development! ODE offers a variety of virtual professional development options such as the Live Training Via Zoom. Our live Zoom training gives you an opportunity to interact with the presenter and participants in real time. Please see our upcoming Live Trainings Via Zoom below:

**Engaging with Empathy**  
**When:** Wednesday, July 29, 2020 • 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

**Strategies for Flourishing in the New Normal? Is it even possible?**  
**When:** Tuesday, August 4, 2020 • 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM

**Skillful Collaboration**  
**When:** Friday, August 7, 2020 • 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM

**Featured Webinar of the Week**
De-escalation Techniques: How to Communicate Effectively with Upset People

How many times have you had to deal with an angry person?

It's easy to get flustered or upset when you're confronted and if you don't know how to respond, you can easily make the situation worse.

Effective de-escalation techniques may feel abnormal, we are intuitively driven into “fight or flight” mode when provoked. However, to effectively de-escalate, we can do neither.

When you respond calmly and with empathy you can stay in control and defuse the situation in a professional, courteous way.

Our goals during this session are to:

1. Identify the seven phases of escalating behavior and ways to intervene during each phase of the cycle
2. Learn to be proactive/use preventative strategies that may decrease the occurrence of escalating behavior
3. Develop a plan for maintaining self-control

Amanda Fisher, ODE Senior Learning and Development Specialist Recommends:

“Leading Your Team Through Change”
This session helped me to reflect on dealing with change from two perspectives: that of a leader, and that of someone who can lead from within their role as a team member. When I came back from maternity leave, I went through a great deal of change professionally and personally. As I reflect on the changes I am experiencing now, reviewing this video helped me to visualize the role I play in the process of change and the fluid nature of change. I
also liked the presenter’s personal stories on how he used change strategies to help him to achieve real results!

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**Professional Book Recommendation**

**LEADERS OPEN DOORS**

“I got to open doors for people!” These seven simple words, spoken by author Bill Treasurer’s five-year-old son, cut straight to what matters most about leadership: True leaders open doors for people.

This book is a game changer. I have used it in leadership development programs and within my own leadership journey. Its simplistic approach to leadership focuses on what really matters. He dives head first into the concept that leaders perceive problems as opportunities and empower those they lead by finding and opening doors to those opportunities. Throughout the text, Treasurer uses stories and examples from his research and career to drive critical leadership points home.

It is also a very easy read. Short, to the point, and full of reflective activities to help me internalize the learning. Anyone, at any point on their leadership journey, will benefit from this book.

As an added bonus, 100% of the royalties from the sales of his book are donated to organizations that open doors for people with special needs.

*If you would like to contribute a professional development book review, please send an email to ODE@untsystem.edu.*
Connecting with Employees to Build Engagement

In our last newsletter, we highlighted the importance of peer coaching and feedback. Feedback, whether from peers or from supervisors, is a key indicator of engagement. During the pandemic, Gallup has seen a strong link between engagement and employees who strongly agree that their manager helps them set priorities. Gallup has also seen a link between engagement and the provision of meaningful feedback, which helps create clear role expectations and also has the peripheral – but powerful – benefit of reducing feelings of loneliness among remote workers.

Gallup found that among those who work from home more than 80% of the week, engagement suffers with little feedback. But as remote workers receive meaningful feedback on a regular basis, their engagement begins to surpass that of workers “on the ground.” This illustrates the need to provide feedback for all employees, regardless of location.

Gallup also noted that while generational differences can sometimes be overstated, *millennials* have shown a strong desire to learn and grow, but they want their managers to ask open-ended questions about their lives and career paths and tailor their guidance based on their answers. Conversations with millennials that don’t open with a general inquiry about their lives often ring hollow, and this may prove especially true today.

ODE recommends that supervisors maintain regular feedback with their teams as well as individual players. While working remotely, you may have to conduct virtual touch point meetings with your staff more regularly. For example, Dr. Donna Asher, Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer, holds 30-minute virtual meetings via Microsoft TEAMS every Monday, Wednesday, Friday with her direct reports.

Dr. Asher Stated, “It is critically important that I stay connected to my team members during these unprecedented times. My team members need to know that I am still here for them and with them managing through the crisis. Not only do we have the 3 times per week touch-base meeting, but we also have a voluntary virtual lunch on Fridays. This replaced the lunch trips we used to have while working in the office. This connection, both formal and informal, has allowed us to grow stronger as a team as we continue to reassure, encourage and support each other through these tough times.”
In addition to more touch points with your team, intentional questions should be directed to employees during regular 1:1 meetings. Dr. Shanda Riley, Assistant Director of Counseling and Wellness Center at UNT-Dallas, stated some questions you can ask your team members are:

- How are you doing?
- What can I do to help?
- What do you need from me right now to help/support you during this time?
- What am I currently doing to support you that you would like for me to continue to do?

These questions may seem basic; however, they are extremely important to ask due to the potential dialogue that may arise, and the impact they may have with an employee. With increasing feedback and intentional interaction with your teams and employees, engagement practices will be cemented.

Gallup (2020, May 23) Wellbeing and Engagement Amid the Pandemic: An update on Gallup’s latest COVID-19 research; memorandum

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**Diversity & Inclusion Featured Training**

**Diversity: The Best Resource for Achieving Business Goals**

“Diversity and inclusion” has become such a familiar phrase that it’s easy to lose sight of what it means. Workplaces that incorporate a wide range of human experience—across gender, culture, age, sexual preference, and other differences—are more adaptable and more innovative places to work than their more homogeneous competitors. Not surprisingly, they do better on recruitment, retention, productivity—basically any measure of success you can think of. This course explains how to improve your organizations diversity and inclusion by thoughtfully examining the challenges and opportunities they present. Learn how to support a diverse workforce through wise management, carefully structured conversations, and a culture designed to celebrate the unique value of each team member. This course includes videos from: Jane Hyun, an internationally renowned
executive coach and leadership strategist Kathryn Minshew, founder and CEO of The Muse, a career discovery platform Wendy Luhabe, South African social entrepreneur Nilofer Merchant, marketing expert and TED speaker (“Sitting Is the Smoking of Our Generation”) Claire Groen, vice president of litigation and deputy general counsel at Amway. Note: This course was produced by Big Think. We are pleased to host this content in our library.