



Empathize

Supporting your staff after distressing world events

There are some subjects you'd probably like to avoid at work. Race, bias and prejudice are perfect examples. After all, you might say the wrong thing and offend someone. But what do you do when you can't avoid those subjects because of current events?

Acknowledge the event

It can be tempting to go about "business as usual." But your staff members look to you for leadership during tough times. They don't need to hear your personal thoughts about the issue. But they don't want you to stay silent either. They need to know you care.

Simply recognize what's going on and that people might be upset. You can say something like, "I want to acknowledge what's going on in the world right now. And I know you might be having a hard time. I want to let you know I'm here for you."

If people ask how you feel about the event, you can say, "I'm upset too." Or say, "This is really hard." Avoid giving your opinion about the situation as this can seem inappropriate.

Supporting your staff

How do you help a distressed person? After all, you don't want to accidentally make it worse. You want to be supportive. You want the person to feel better.

We often say things that try to "fix" negative feelings. But this denies and dismisses a person's experience. While it may come from a good place, you want to avoid saying things like:

- "It could be worse."
- "Everything will be fine."
- "I know how you feel."
- "Try to focus on good things."

Instead, give space for someone's emotions. Feeling upset is an important part of healing and working through a disturbing event. You can say:

- "I don't know what to say but I'm here for you."
- "I'm listening."
- "Talk to me anytime."
- "You're not alone."

And sometimes the best thing to say is nothing at all. Listen without judgment. It's an act of support and a chance to understand. And if you want to offer more help, you can always refer your employees to us.

Support for you

A manager's job is hard. You not only work to take care of your staff, you have your own feelings to manage. You might be upset about what's going on too. You're not alone.

You can always talk to us. You have access to free short-term counseling by phone, televideo or in-person. We're here for you and your employees 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.



The EAP is administered by Resources For Living, LLC.
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