

BEING TOGETHER APART

INTRODUCTION

Learn ways to stay connected while being apart as remote workers. This document will discuss the strategies of Being Together Apart. We are going to look at the ways that we can THRIVE and not just survive in this new normal. Everyone is accountable to create a culture of inclusiveness.

TRUST

Trust grows through authentic actions over time. Communication builds trust in a remote environment. Prefacing communication with your **context** can help to prevent any miscommunication when change is occurring. How to create a foundation of trust with teammates remotely?

- Share Outlook calendars with teammates.
- Provide open channels to communicate with each other.
- Share ownership in the work that team needs to complete.

MEMBERSHIP & BELONGING

Membership and sense of belonging happen when we feel safe and valued for what makes us different or unique. It makes us happier and more productive. We are also healthier and better able to cope with job stress when we feel that sense of belonging. Being willing to listen to your teammates will help with belonging. Different yet equal: accept this fundamental reality. All remote team members are equal, but their experiences may differ. Managers create a healthy system of meetings, events, and habits that keep people communicating.

- Use Microsoft Teams for discussion of questions, projects, or shared decisions.
- Use Microsoft Project Planner to view teammates' work tasks.
- Schedule a weekly 15-minute team huddle to discuss non-work topics.

RITUALS & TRADITIONS

Rituals and traditions are changing because we are working remotely. You might have had a ritual of greeting your co-workers with a handshake or a knock on their door to say, "good morning". Another ritual might have been taking a walk around campus to discuss an idea or work through a problem. Maybe you went to the lunchroom and shared a meal with co-workers. These rituals provided us with scaffolding and structures for our day. We must now create rituals in this new online world.

- Have a virtual coffee or lunch break with a teammate.
- Create a group chat where fun topics are shared for laughter.
- Use cameras for video calls to 'virtually' see each other.

CARING FOR EACH OTHER

One key to building great remote relationships is intention. Show your team members that you care about them. A team that cares builds greatness together. Create opportunities to connect that are purposeful and not purposeless. Create a time to laugh and have fun with teams or individuals. Possible activities:

- Celebrate birthdays & work anniversaries.
- Plan a virtual costume dress-up event.
- Plan game-time event: Bingo, Trivia, Hangman, Charades.
- Conduct an event party:
 - Favorite App Party: come share how it improves your life and what you did before you discovered it.
 - Book Club Party: come share a book that changed your life, made you laugh or cry.
 - Recipe Party: come share your favorite recipe. Tell the group why it is your favorite.
 - Gratitude Share Party: come share stories of something or someone you feel grateful for.
 - 10 Minutes of Fame Party: come share anything about yourself. Just like when you were in Kindergarten and you had a show and tell day.

SHARED STORYTELLING

All department members should consider sharing their stories with the team. Whether that is a time when your child would not leave you alone while on the call, or your teenage son showed up behind you with his shirt off. Or a time that your dog would not stop barking. Our culture is built through our lived experiences. Through these times, we can create opportunities for culture to be built and built again.

SUMMARY

Take the time to reach out to each other on the team. A simple gesture of showing you care goes a long way in keeping the relationship growing while working apart.