

HR Strategies for Picking Up the Pieces After the Pandemic

A three-part series focused on supporting your employees when they need it most.



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Strategy 2 – Tap into Your Own Empathy to Support Others

White Paper by Vicki Hess

Picking Up the Pieces After the Pandemic.



Picking Up the Pieces After the Pandemic is a three-part series featuring insight and information from Human Resources expert Vicki Hess to help you support your employees when they need it most. Here, we explore Hess' second strategy, which focuses on tapping into your own empathy to support others. The two other papers in this series center on additional strategies: *Stress, Burnout & Trauma...Know the Difference* and *Create Powerful Connections*.

Strategy 1 Stress, Burnout & Trauma...Know the Difference

Strategy 2 Tap into Your Own Empathy to Support Others

Strategy 3 Create Powerful Connections

It's good to remember that being able to effectively support others doesn't require that you've walked the same path as that person.

Brene Brown, social scientist and author of several New York Times bestsellers shares this. "Empathy doesn't require that we have the exact experiences as the person sharing their story with us... Empathy is connecting with the emotion that someone is experiencing, not the event or the circumstance." *Brené Brown, Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead (Penguin, 2012).*

Many people think that empathy is something that you're born with when in fact that's not necessarily true. As an HR professional you can learn strategies for being more empathetic. This starts with focused listening. When someone comes to you looking for assistance or complaining about something that's going wrong there are steps that you can take to have an empathetic conversation.



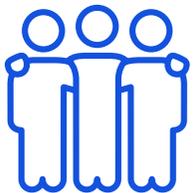
Steps to empathetic conversations.

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Steps to empathetic conversations	
1	Stop what you are doing and give them your undivided attention.
2	Take a deep breath and calm your mind.
3	Acknowledge the pain — “I’m sorry that you are going through this.”
4	Share your feelings — “I know this is very challenging right now — I feel it too.”
5	Thank them for sharing — “Thank you for letting me know.”
6	“How can I best support you right now?”

You can easily find out what folks are looking for by asking them.

Identify the impact of trauma and provide assistance.



Do they need support?

When someone needs support, they might come to you to discuss options for managing the challenges and look for encouraging words. Someone who needs support connecting with their mental health benefits might just need the number for your EAP.

Do they need solutions?

When someone comes to you looking for solutions, they want you to solve the problem. Someone who needs a solution needs for you to call the EAP to make the connection.

Do they need solace?

When someone comes to you looking for solace, they want a shoulder to cry on or a friendly listening ear. They do not want you to solve the problem or give them ideas for how to solve it. They simply want someone to listen and feel like they are heard.

Empathy is a powerful tool to use when helping someone cope with increased stress, burnout and trauma. Remember that saying that we were given two ears and one mouth because we should listen twice as much as we talk.

More About Vicki Hess

Vicki works with healthcare organizations and associations nationwide to mitigate the root causes of employee disengagement. While constantly monitoring industry trends, and doing research on her own, Vicki zeros in on what's working (and what's not) and customizes solutions to complement each organization's culture and place on the engagement journey. She works with organizations and associations across the country to positively impact employee engagement through consulting, workshops, retreats and keynote presentations.

Her unique views on patient and employee engagement are evidence-based, relatable and real world. Organizations that implement Vicki's ideas experience increased productivity, safety, quality, retention, client satisfaction, creativity and more.

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