

## COMMUNICATING UNDER PRESSURE

3 November 2020

There are myriad reasons why issues might be surfacing now, and if you're feeling the pressure, we're not surprised! We're heading towards the end of a year that has been unprecedented in modern times - the global pandemic has affected us all in so many ways; change-of-season health issues are rife; there have been emotive elections both here and overseas; and even things like our favourite ways to de-stress such as following sports, are looking vastly different to this time last year. And now, as we head into a festive season that seems to arrive earlier every year – and often brings with it a whirl of social activity and financial pressures – we can expect that ourselves and those around us might be experiencing heightened degrees of stress. And when we're stressed, it's likely to affect the way we get through our day and our interactions with others - communication can suffer, we can miss clues that all is not well in the workplace, and we can find ourselves in a cycle of best intentions with less-than-perfect outcomes.

How we talk, how we listen and what we notice are always important, but when the pressure is on, they become even more more-so. Here's some practical tips to help you in your workplace. They apply to you, your staff, and your own manager – great workplaces take a team effort!

### **Notice what is going on around you**

What are people saying and how are they saying it? How are they reacting to those around them? How are they responding to company directives?

### **Ask, then listen**

Keep communication lines open. Ask people how they are doing, then be intentional about listening to their reply. Could your listening skills be improved? Take this self assessment to find out – [How Well Do I Listen?](#)

### **Be specific with your own communication**

Specifically define the problem or name the feeling. It is unlikely that others will know what we are wanting or feeling if we leave them guessing.

📞 0800 SELF HELP (0800 735 343)

✉ info@eapworks.co.nz

🌐 [www.eapworks.co.nz](http://www.eapworks.co.nz)

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### **Stay focused**

Discuss only the issue at hand. Getting off track and bringing up old issues can be confusing and annoying. Don't say things you don't mean or threaten actions you won't carry out.

### **Say less**

Silence is helpful when emotions are strong, and we feel stressed or tired. Often during those times, it is easy to say things we do not mean.

### **Be tactful**

Ban blaming. Keep comments descriptive rather than critical, blaming or all-knowing. Avoid criticism and sarcasm.

### **Act if needed**

Sometimes people just need someone to hear them out, and other times you will need to take action. If you are not sure what to do in a situation, take the time to seek the support of a trusted peer or your own manager.

### **Take care of yourself**

Recognise your own limits and stress levels. Be kind to yourself as well as others. Take time out if you can, even if only for a few minutes. Check out our self care suggestions – [Using a Few Minutes for Self Care](#).

### **GET IN TOUCH**

Talk to us about what's going on in your workplace and how we can support you and your team to recognise, be prepared for, and get through the tougher times. From one-on-one support through to training for managers and teams, EAPworks provides a wide range of support services that can be adapted to meet your needs. Call us on 0800 SELF HELP (0800 735 343) or drop us a line at [enquiries@eapworks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@eapworks.co.nz).

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