

1-on-1 Conversation Starters for Times of Change

As you and your team navigate through change, use these thoughtful questions and conversation starters to spur meaningful dialogue and provide a safe place for employees to share questions they might not otherwise ask. Take notes and capture your learnings to leverage for future conversations.

1-on-1 with:

Date:

What is top of mind for you right now?

What are two things that are going well, and what is one thing you are really struggling with right now?

How can I do a better job of supporting you? If you were in my position, what, if anything, would you do differently?

What questions or concerns do you have about your work, our team, or our organization that I can answer?

How are you and your family coping? (Let me know if you need more information about our company's policy on paid leave and other support services).

It's normal to feel stressed or have a hard time focusing right now. What tactics are you using to manage your work and help you mitigate stress?

How are you feeling about your workload and personal productivity?

How can our team do a better job of supporting each other?

Personalizing Your 1-on-1 Approach

Everyone deals with uncertainty differently, so through times of transition or ambiguity, it's even more important to tailor your management style and adapt to each individual team member.

Think about a specific member of your team and select a few different tactics that can help you strengthen your support for and connection with that individual. If you're not sure what will resonate with them, you can use this checklist to start a conversation about their work preferences and style. Then, make a commitment to do something specific and intentional to connect with this person.

Keys to Connecting with:

- Leave them alone to work
- Make sure they have the opportunity to collaborate
- Ask questions that lead to self-discovery
- Share your perspective and feelings and encourage them to do the same
- Spend time together ideating and exploring different options
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues, because they may not always speak their mind
- Give them autonomy to make decisions
- Provide ample time to prepare before a meeting, presentation, or conversation
- Communicate expectations in writing
- Provide direction on how to focus their time
- Invite their support in building team camaraderie
- Give space and permission to lead
- Give reassurance and praise
- Prepare a flexible agenda and be prepared to go with the flow
- Be logical, methodical, and factual
- Listen carefully
- Empathize with their concerns
- Allow time for reflection and study
- Ask open-ended questions
- Provide space for them to talk things through out loud
- Present options, then let them make the decision
- Use a partnering approach
- Focus on future benefits
- Help them think about what can be deprioritized

What is one thing you will do this week to connect with this team member?