Human Resources
Training & Development
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Tips for Supervising Remotely

The following is a list of ideas and resources for supervising your team while working remotely. Training & Development is available to help! For additional guidance, or if you have a recommendation to add to this resource, please contact Maggie Denna at mdenna@uga.edu.

Get familiar with available resources

- [Distance-based Professional Development Opportunities](): This document features curated playlists of online learning opportunities from LinkedIn Learning, UGA-specific trainings, and many other ideas to help your employees learn and practice new or developing skills.
- [Remote Learning Circles](): This document features guidance on how to lead your group through learning something together. Many variations and ideas are at your fingertips. Additionally, there are multiple sample agendas featured to kick off your learning circle.
- [Well-being Resources](): This document features information about KEPRO, USG's Employee Assistance Program, and more resources available for you and your team's emotional and physical well-being.

Plan moments of connection for your team

Zoom meetings are a great way to provide these opportunities! Encourage team members to turn on their cameras so everyone sees one another.

- **Staff meetings:** Hold your regular staff meetings in the Zoom platform. It may feel a little different at first, but you can still communicate in ways that your team has already practiced before.
- **Weekly huddles:** Have your team join a brief check-in meeting to share each person's top priorities for the week or status updates on important projects.
- **Friday afternoon sign-offs:** Set up a Zoom meeting for Friday afternoon. Have each team member choose three words to describe their week. These words can describe their personal or professional worlds. This activity provides a touchpoint and lets your team connect as individuals.
- **Celebrations:** Does your team usually take colleagues out to lunch on birthdays? Then have a Zoom lunch! Do you celebrate team successes in a big way? Find a way to keep regular celebrations going, and look for new creative ways to celebrate, too.
- **Virtual happy hour:** We have heard that many teams on campus have been holding happy hours after 5:00 p.m. to catch up and talk about the world around them.

Utilize virtual icebreakers to deepen connection

Some of these can be done spur of the moment, and some may require a little pre-planning.

- **In the moment options**:
  - **Gratitude**: Ask each team member to share three things they are thankful for. Pausing as a team to focus on gratitude can lift spirits in big ways.

- o **More or Less:** Ask each team member to share one thing they find themselves doing more of and one thing they find themselves doing less us since remote working started.
  - o **True Confessions**: Each person shares one confession to the group, e.g. haven't worn make-up in three weeks, hiring someone to cut the grass even though I am home, etc. (Idea submitted by UGA Gwinnett)
  - o **Connection questions:**
    - ▪ What would you do if you won the lottery? (Idea submitted by the College of Veterinary Medicine)
    - ▪ What is your biggest pet peeve? (Idea submitted by the College of Veterinary Medicine)
    - ▪ When all of this is over, what is the first place you plan to visit—other than school or work?
    - ▪ What is one thing going well for you? What is one area in which you are struggling?
  - o **Sketch-a-friend:** Have each person on the team choose another team member to illustrate. Then everyone shares their drawings and the team tries to guess who was illustrated.
- Plan ahead options:
  - o **Virtual background challenges:** The first step to these icebreakers is to verify that all members on your team have the technological ability to upload virtual backgrounds. If they have the technology for this, but don't know how, find a moment to connect with them and walk them through it. The possibilities of this type of icebreaker are endless. Here are a few ideas to get you started:
    - ▪ Choose a background image of your favorite vacation spot and share with your colleagues about your choice.
    - ▪ Feature your favorite food in the background.
    - ▪ If you could be an animal, which animal would you be? Feature it in your background.
    - ▪ What's your favorite spot at UGA, in Athens, or in the world? Find a picture of it and make it your background.
  - o **Most delicious meal:** Ask your team members to share the most delicious thing they've cooked (or eaten if they're not chefs!) or that they're planning to cook. Ask them to share the recipe in the chat feature.
  - o **Team playlist:** This idea was inspired by the Division of Development & Alumni Relations' "Quarantune Spring" playlist on Spotify. Give it a listen! Ask each team member to think of a song that motivates them and ask them to have it ready to play a 30 second part of it during your next meeting.
  - o **Zoom competitions:** Categories could be best on-screen hairstyle, most random object in the background, best guest star—and so many more creative options. Check out this article for more inspiration.
  - o **Childhood photos:** Have each team member submit to you ahead of time a photo of themselves as a child. Then screenshare and reveal each picture and see if the team can guess who is being featured.
  - o **Team art gallery:** Ask each team member to go on a walk and take a photo of the most beautiful thing they saw. Ask them to explain what drew them to this specific view. Then create a team gallery of beautiful scenery.

Additional Resources for Supervisors:

Webinar: How to transition your team to remote work (Articulate)

Guide to Managing Your (Newly) Remote Workers (Harvard Business Review)

Leading Remote Workers: The Coronavirus' Impact on Effective Management (Forbes)

How to Manage Remote Employees (Gallup)

How to Manage the Loneliness and Isolation of Remote Workers (Gallup)

How to Build Trust with Remote Employees (Gallup)

Remote Worker Isolation: Perception vs. Reality (Gallup)

How to Keep Remote Worker Wellbeing High (Gallup)