

The Expert Team Leader

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Keep Your Team Motivated While Working Remotely

The “new normal” of working remotely, whether full- or part-time, has left many struggling with motivation, performance, and overall well-being. How do managers keep their staff energized and help them address some of the work-related problems they face?

Research on high performing teams identifies three main psychological needs that staff may be struggling with at this time: **A Sense of Belonging; A Sense of Competence, and A Sense of Autonomy.**



Here are a few practices leaders can use to help team members stay motivated and engaged.

Belonging: Staff feels connected to you, the team, and to the work itself.

- Don't let people fade into the background. Verbally recognize each member's contributions and achievements
- Acknowledge that it can be hard to stay focused during this period. Communicate that you care about your staff's well-being, not just their productivity.
- Don't ignore problems that arise. Let staff talk about them in your one-to-one meetings. This helps identify obstacles and strengthens the connection with you and the organization.

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- **Competence:** Staff feels like they are still effective and growing in their skills.
 - Get staff's input on ongoing operations. Where can the team improve? Foster a sense of ownership and empowerment to tweak processes that may have grown stagnant.
 - Continue with professional development, even if it is online or in virtual meetings. Request that individuals share what they've learned with the rest of the team.
 - Keep one-to-one meetings meaningful. Use them to set individual goals, establish strategies to reach them, and to check in on progress.
- **Autonomy:** Staff experiences intrinsic motivation because they have the power to make choices that align with their values, interests and about how they achieve their assigned professional goals and team objectives.
 - Be clear about why a task, assignment or project is important to team or organizational success. Get staff's input on ways to get things done
 - Encourage initiative and active participation.
 - Be mindful of any tendency to use controlling language. Avoid unrealistic deadlines and micro-managing. Commit to motivating through positive feedback and encouragement.

Remember, we are all more engaged when we feel valued, that we are learning and growing in expertise, and when we feel empowered to make decisions about the contributions we make.

Which of these needs resonates with you personally? Where does Autonomy rate with you as a motivating factor?