

Clergy Conversations: Staff Supervision from a Distance

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Monday, April 27, 2020

Introduction:

- Keep current staff in place
- Working remotely is not new: Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, 4-6 million people in the United States worked remotely

Best Practices for Supervision

1. Communication

- a. Key to supervising staff remotely
- b. Have weekly team meetings with your staff
 1. Maintain community
 2. Keep informed
- c. Have a weekly one-on-one with each of your direct reports.
 1. What are they working on?
 2. How can I help you/what do you need from me?
 3. Face-to-face conversation is preferable if available
- d. Be specific about spending limits and deadlines.
- e. Pastors should take every opportunity to celebrate the work of their team members
 1. Utilize social media and newsletter columns to highlight staff
 2. Keep staff visible: participate in worship, share a daily devotion, etc.
- f. Let church members know the best way to reach staff members, but be sure to maintain boundaries (hours available, etc.)
- g. Be honest in communicating the situation (what steps are being taken to prevent layoffs, etc.)

2. Flexibility

- a. Some staff schedules will need to be adjusted because of different situations
 1. Children doing school work
 2. Day care not available
 3. Caregiving for family members
- b. Recognize that some staff will thrive during this time but others may find it difficult (personalities, job portfolios, etc.); will need to support staff who are struggling
- c. Difficult to measure success right now: need to adapt to celebrate successes in different ways; more narrative measures than numerical
- d. Annual Staff evaluations can be delayed

3. Creativity

- a. Ask (or require) team members to spend time working on new and innovative ministry ideas. Share those ideas as a staff team and work together to make the best idea(s) happen.
- b. Consider what programs need to be cut. What wasn't missed when we couldn't do it and isn't needed when we come back?
- c. Use staff in different capacities right now
 1. Custodians: Deep cleaning, preparing to return to church

2. Musicians: planning for Christmas and next Easter
 3. Administrative Assistant: conducting membership audits, etc.
 4. Children & Youth Workers: connect with virtual communities for idea sharing, etc.
- d. Staff can and should take advantage of time for continuing education to sharpen skills
 1. Online classes for new skills
 2. Peer to peer mentoring
 3. Online presentations are available.
 - e. Work on a "Dream Project"
 1. Encourage staff to take up the project they have not had time for in the past
 2. Don't focus on what you cannot do: dream about how to engage new people in new ways
4. General Tips
- a. Continue to follow applicable Labor Laws
 - b. Continue to use the Staff Parish Relations Committee
 1. Continue to meet as scheduled
 2. Keep informed about what the staff are doing
 - c. Clergy are encouraged to use the Facebook Covid-19 support group to share ideas about staff supervision
 - d. Be ready for staff who may want to work differently upon return to buildings
 1. Some may want to incorporate a work from home schedule
 2. Some may want to continue new things or stop old things
 - e. Start making re-entry plans: Create a re-entry team
 1. What new things should happen?
 2. What things need to be left behind?
 3. What needs to happen before we can resume in person gatherings (eased governmental guidelines, lower number of cases, etc.)
 4. What needs to happen once we resume in person gatherings (cleaning procedures, gathering size limits, etc.)