

We Hear You

Leadership at All Levels

Since the outset of the pandemic, researchers from Saskatchewan universities and colleges have been learning from people just like you – healthcare employees struggling to navigate work in a pandemic. In sharing heartfelt stories of your struggles and your work to redefine success, you emphasized four things that deeply affected your experience of work in a pandemic – teamwork, communication, burnout, and leadership. This newsletter series summarizes some of the valuable things we learned through your stories.

During the pandemic, you shared stories about how leadership can be powerful in supporting teams throughout a crisis. But many of you weren't necessarily referencing managers or senior leaders – you were highlighting how helpful forms of leadership can be found within your own team.

Strong leadership leads to positive experiences. For leaders, whether in management, government, or direct care roles, the key to boosting morale is to be present. You told us that when leaders were working alongside you and being attentive in authentic ways, you felt supported as a result.

“We had some of our managers split up, to be there on weekends, so that we would have leadership in the building every day of the week. Staff really appreciated that managers are right in there with them, making sure that everybody has everything that they need when they need it.”

Some of you shared that you want to be included in the decision-making processes in some way, allowing you to be better advocates and leaders in your own positions. You believe that as people providing healthcare services, you have a perspective that is important to your teams' success. You explained how seeing your leaders regularly during your day-to-day work provides opportunities to meaningfully share your perspectives.



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Leadership presence

When individuals in leadership roles took time to genuinely ask how staff were feeling and actively listened to their responses, staff reported that they felt appreciated, and that this helped to alleviate stress and uncertainty.

“Our manager and our resource person have literally been on the floor every single day that I've been there, and it has been amazing. It's just good to have her get so involved and seeing what we're dealing with and then taking our feedback back to the people who are making those decisions and ensuring that we are still protected.”

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You are leading at work during the pandemic, and you need to be as connected as possible with your leaders during a crisis.

You are leaders

You shared stories of colleagues who represented leadership in a pandemic. You shared about people leading team huddles to check in about the personal impact of the pandemic. You told us about covering shifts and working extra to give others some reprieve. Some teams shared with us how they collaborated to create flow maps for physically distancing patients for the safety of everyone. Others talked about redesigning roles or adapting their practice to better meet patient needs during the pandemic. Your collaborative and caring leadership helped to enhance patient quality of life and minimize the adverse impact of the pandemic.



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