



How to INCLUDE during the COVID-19 crisis

As the coronavirus pandemic expands all around us, stress, uncertainty, and fear is palpably present everywhere. While we hunker down on the home front under shelter-in-place orders to take care of our families and make our communities safer by not going out, how do we approach being inclusive with those we work with while we are separated?

At Korn Ferry, in our learning workshops on how to lead and manage inclusively, we have for some time now been using an approach called **INCLUDE** where each letter represents behaviors that help create inclusive environments. As our world changed overnight, we took each of these and reframed them to apply to the current crisis.

Impact: Be mindful of your own impact on others and ask for feedback often about how you can be more supportive and helpful. Expect that people are under stress—reconnect if you may have had a misunderstanding or didn't treat someone with the respect and appreciation they deserved—talk it through rather than let it go.

Notice: Pay attention to how others are reacting in our daily interactions and how they are faring generally. Reach out to ask

how they are doing. Pause and ask them to call you back after a call if you notice something different in their demeanor.

Communicate: Stay connected, use video cameras, and ensure each team member understands their importance and role in the current situation. Listen carefully and probe to truly understand what each person is going through and flex to their needs as much as possible.

Leverage: These times have created new needs and understanding what unique talents each team member brings is even more important as is being sure that each person on the team is engaged and able to contribute their best work. Do you know the full breadth of talents each person brings and how to unleash that talent? Don't just rely on your usual go-to performers—how can we use these unique situations to tap someone new?



Uncover: With meetings happening virtually and most often with video cameras on, we are seeing and showing more of each of our realities. From the kids being home, to pets, to less than ideal office situations along with more casual attire and less than perfect grooming. This is an unparalleled, natural opportunity to be authentic. To show who we are and what matters to each of us—and learn that about others. Take the time to ask and understand—where is each team member working or what is that baby’s name that is cooing in the background. This will help move us all into deeper, more trusting relationships with colleagues.

Disrupt: Let’s face it, we all have some preconceived notions about our team members. Let’s take this time to challenge those—getting to know people is the first step—but also, as new and novel challenges crop up—let’s stop the tendency to think of which person “has what it takes.” Think about how each team member might contribute and use this unprecedented time to assign stretch assignments to engage team members and drive development. In the end, you’ll end up with more go-to performers on your team.

Empathize: Understanding what each team member is going through means sharing experiences and feelings. Starting a meeting, or saving a few moments at the end, to sincerely ask how people are doing and coping is critical. Each of us are going through different experiences and highs and lows. Connecting on this level will help us show our true appreciation for others and their experiences while deepening our understanding.

The COVID-19 crisis is offering us all an unparalleled opportunity to bring our teams together and demonstrate inclusion in completely new ways. Let’s seize this moment to **INCLUDE!**



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About Korn Ferry

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