Keeping Employees Close in a Time of Distancing and Distress

Employee Engagement During Pandemic and Social Unrest

Deborah L. Kerr
deborah-l-kerr@tamu.edu

Kent Herring
CEO, Family Eldercare
@familyeldercare
www.familyeldercare.org
Employee Attitude Results

• Favorable job attitude → good performance
• Employee engagement → employee retention
  → profitability
  → productivity
Engaged Employees

• Identify personally with the job + are emotionally attached
• Are motivated by the mission and work itself
• Contribute high energy and dedication
• Allocate personal resources toward tasks
Employee Engagement Challenges 2020

Two global, concurrent events

• Pandemic

• Civil unrest, community actions, protests
# Pandemics and Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Pandemic / Civil Actions</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1350</td>
<td>Black Plague</td>
<td>Laws and attitudes about labor and compensation changed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>H1N1 Flu Pandemic</td>
<td>Employer sponsored health care implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>SARS-CoV Pandemic</td>
<td>Effects on health and essential workers – three years after pandemic PTSD, depression and alcohol dependence / abuse continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>COVID-19 Pandemic, Civil Actions, Unrest, Protests</td>
<td>Possible permanent changes in work systems, organizational culture, and employee relationships; ongoing mental health concerns</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Civil Action and Unrest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Actions</th>
<th>Post-action Issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ca. 1350 - 1500</td>
<td>Plague, European unrest; Hundred Years’ War</td>
<td>Population re-building (200 years); economic disaster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Los Angeles, CA</td>
<td>About 290,000 citizens directly affected and reported fear for their families’ lives and their own; higher rates of PTSD patterns and symptoms (Hanson, 1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Ferguson, MO</td>
<td>Black and White citizens reported similar rates of PTSD, depression, and anger (Galovski, 2016); mental intervention is likely indicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>Higher rates of major depression in residents living near epicenter of the protests (Hines, 2020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>Review of mental health effects after collective actions (protests, civil unrest, riots)</td>
<td>Delivering mental health services following the collective actions is indicated for PTSD, anxiety, substance abuse, suicide risk (Ni, 2020)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engagement drivers and results

- Social impact
- Progressive practices

Antecedents
- Values
- Job characteristics

Employees

Consequences
- Job satisfaction
- Commitment < Intention to quit
- Individual citizenship behavior
Enabling the Leader’s Well-being

Values: Reinforce org purpose, restate, demonstrate
       Reflect on your individual, subjective experience

Health: Identify and name your emotions
        Evaluate your self-care
        Check your boundaries and your on/off switch

Performance: Focus on managing changes
             Check work goals, responsibilities, expectations
             Identify organizational risks
Facilitating Employee Engagement

Values: Reinforce purpose, restate, demonstrate
       Identify actions that reflect org values

Health: Talk openly and compassionately about emotions
       Support employees in setting boundaries
       Check in regularly

Performance: Check work goals, responsibilities, expectations
             Provide what employees need to be productive
             Be as flexible as possible
Family Eldercare Responds

Kent Herring, CEO

family ELDERCARE
Compassion is an action word with no boundaries.

Prince
(Prince Rogers Nelson)
American singer-songwriter, musician, record producer, dancer, actor, and filmmaker
1958 – 2016