

People Success Toolkit

Healthcare Workers



Dear Senior Leader,

The initial brunt and ongoing burden of COVID-19 has tested healthcare organizations around the world, and healthcare workers face a unique set of obstacles in keeping patients and themselves safe while navigating complex environments to deliver care.

As you know well, healthcare workers are known for seeing their work as a calling and stepping up in the face of challenge, but they are ultimately human—and understanding their needs is both a moral obligation and commonsense leadership as you guide your organization through this time.

Amnesty International reported in July 2020 that **more than 3,000 healthcare workers** worldwide have died of COVID-19, bringing added strain to an already overburdened workforce.

Based on our experience, a few core people-centric habits can make a big difference in helping organizations understand and respond effectively to their people's needs while shepherding organizations through change:

- Frequently gather employee feedback on critical topics
- Equip managers with insights that help them address concerns
- Have regular team and one-on-one conversations
- Check in on goals to prioritize work and time
- Learn from input in a way that improves organizational and individual success

I'm pleased to share this toolkit, and I hope you and your team find it informative and helpful.

I'd also love to hear what you think. Please [message me](#) if you have questions, would like to learn more, or want to connect with others who are working through these same challenges.



Justin Black

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An HR Leader's Playbook: Healthcare Workers

Putting your people at the center of everything you do has never been more important. Some healthcare workers have carried the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic on their shoulders, while others have been sidelined as demand for nonessential healthcare services has varied since early 2020. How you and your leaders respond to this dual challenge sets the tone for long-term organizational success.

As you navigate this time, a few core habits can create a shared sense of purpose and sustain people through what is likely to be a long and unpredictable road.



Habit 1

Get Feedback and Insights



Habit 2

Have Conversations



Habit 3

Set Effective Goals



Habit 4

Encourage Learning and Growth

Stay connected, understand, and respond to employee needs

Here are a few high-impact practices that you can adopt today.

- Frequently gather employee feedback on critical topics
- Equip managers with insights that help them address concerns
- Have regular team and one-on-one conversations to ensure people can adapt effectively to change
- Check in on goals to prioritize work and time
- Provide resources to help people make sense of this change in work
- Learn from input in a way that improves organizational and individual success



Habit 1

Get Feedback and Insights

Gathering employee feedback is critical to supporting healthcare workers. It’s particularly important to hear from people whose jobs have recently changed due to economic flux and from those most closely involved in treating COVID-19 patients and developing treatments. While no two organizations are the same, there are a few fundamental questions that every organization should consider asking employees. Below are some common questions that organizations face when setting up an effective pulsing strategy:

When should we survey?

We recommend that you launch surveys on a regular basis, as often as monthly, given the rapidly changing environment for healthcare workers. For organizations that want a more ongoing channel for feedback or may lack the resources to launch regular ad-hoc surveys, we recommend an always-on approach. These surveys, when short and easily accessible, allow for employees to share what’s most important to them at a time that suits their unique circumstances.

What should we ask?

Deploying a short pulse survey to employees can uncover practical advice to help healthcare organizations maintain a safe environment, both from a physical health-and-safety standpoint and for the mental health and safety of their workers. If you’re already pulsing or just starting, consider asking these questions.

How are you?	How are you doing?
Employee Safety	I feel safe here as an employee.
Resources	I have the resources I need to do my job well.
Speak My Mind	I feel free to speak my mind without fear of negative consequences.
Manager Support	I can get the support I need from my manager.
Resilience	I am able to cope effectively with work-related stress.
Resource Priorities	What kinds of resources are most critical as you think about your needs right now? (Select up to two.)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a.) Employee health-and-safety information b.) Child- or family-care, including remote learning for school-age kids c.) Well-being resources, such as support for burnout or grief d.) Remote work resources e.) Updated patient safety protocols f.) Other (please specify in comments)

* Unless noted otherwise, we suggest you ask each item on a 5pt scale, with 1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 5 being “Strongly Agree” and customize as appropriate. For question 1, the 5pt scale can range from “Not at all well” to “Very well.”

Open-ended question

In addition to survey items, Glint strongly recommends allowing free-form comments to capture employees' direct perspective and practical solutions. With artificial intelligence available today, even tens of thousands of employee comments can be quickly summarized and categorized into actionable insights to help leaders understand where more work is needed.

Open Ended

What would help you feel more supported right now?

COVID-19 question

We also recommend that you look at the results of employees in frontline roles involving the care of COVID-19 patients separately from those in nonclinical roles or those who have not been involved in treating such patients. This distinction could be important in identifying who may be in greater need of support for burnout or grief, or who may feel a greater or lesser sense of purpose during this unusual time. If you can't draw this distinction using existing data, consider adding a survey question for employees to self-identify:

COVID-19 Treatment

I am in a role that requires me to test, transport, and/or treat COVID-19 patients.

- a.) Yes
- b.) No

Who should see the results?

Share employee pulse feedback at the organizational and manager-level to ensure actions address what matters most to people by geography, function, personal circumstances, and other variables. Releasing pulse results to managers encourages frequent team and individual conversations as circumstances "on the floor" related to people's roles, supply availability, patient census, and care protocols change frequently.



Habit 2

Have Conversations

Conversations are the best way to fuel action based on pulse insights—they build trust, ensure effective prioritization of work and goals, surface roadblocks and resource needs, and prompt ongoing action.

For healthcare organizations, conversations can be integrated into shift pass downs or rounds, where supervisors can check in with groups of employees to get a read on current needs and challenges. Managers and employees should be having regular one-on-one meetings to ensure that individual concerns are being addressed. For more detail on what to ask, please see [the conversation guide in this toolkit](#).



Habit 3

Set Goals Effectively

New patient care demands, virtual care, and staffing changes have forced healthcare organizations to make significant revisions to operating procedures, often impacting individual priorities.

Having more frequent goal-setting conversations with smaller, bite-sized objectives will help employees concentrate on critical activities that will contribute to their own development and align with the broader organizational objectives.

Managers can support employees by asking, "What are the most impactful things for you to spend your time on right now? What goals can be pushed back or transferred?"

What employees don't need:

- A lot of documentation
- Rigidity
- Complexity

What employees need:

- Support
- Focus
- A feeling of control
- Connection with colleagues and with the organization



Habit 4

Encourage Learning and Growth

As healthcare organizations confront new realities in delivering patient care, workers in a broad swath of roles will need to acquire new skills and capabilities. In turn, new ways of working will spur many people to reflect on what meaningful work looks like.

Learning is a critical habit that helps people respond to a changing environment. It may look very different for each employee. Some might want to expand their capabilities to help the organization in new ways or change paths all together, while others may need to learn new ways to practice self-care amid major stressors.

Encourage managers and employees to reflect on challenges and take steps to learn and grow with organizational support. Revisiting learning throughout frequent manager and employee touchpoints and in everyday work experiences helps make it part of the way we improve every day, instead of a separate effort.

Learning Resources

[LinkedIn Learning](#): Managing Change for Managers

[McKinsey](#): Adapting workplace learning in the time of coronavirus

[New England Journal of Medicine](#): Managing Uncertainty in the New Normal of COVID-19

[Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#): Interim U.S. Guidance ... for Healthcare Personnel with Potential Exposure to COVID-19

[SHRM](#): How to Support Employees Through Grief and Loss



Get Started

Actions to Support Healthcare Workers

Here are some specific actions to support a people-centric approach in healthcare. We've broken it down for each level of your organization. Start where it makes the most sense for you.

Organization

- Model a commitment to physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

- Deploy regular pulses to gain insights into how your people are doing.

- Segment your review of results based on different scenarios faced by distinct teams, facilities, or regions (for example, acute care hospitals versus ambulatory surgery centers doing elective procedures, or regions with higher transmission rates or closed schools).

- Ensure people have access to tools and resources they need to get work done.

- Acknowledge the ongoing uncertainty of the situation: continue to be upfront about what is known versus subject to change, referencing any successes in navigating early uncertainty in the pandemic.

- Create a communications vehicle that is updated regularly and is the single source of truth for information related to COVID, such as safety protocols.

Manager

- Support all your employees, both those directly involved in patient care and those who are not and may be working remotely, as team members should all feel that their physical, mental, and emotional well-being matters.

- Check in with your team as frequently as circumstances and spans of control permit; look for opportunities to "meet your people where they are," especially if team meetings are difficult to keep consistent at this time.

- Regularly review team and individual goals and priorities to ensure alignment.

- Discuss how team members can best share needs and progress with you.

- Encourage learning and growth in the face of challenge.

Employee

- Determine how you will communicate if you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed. Schedule time to connect with people personally.

- Share your perspective on what you need to sustain your efforts and capacity for work during this challenging time.

- Make sure you clearly understand the priorities and goals for yourself and your team. Discuss how you will communicate needs and progress to your manager.

- Consider what new skills or training you need to succeed if your role or organizational policies have changed.

A Conversation Guide for Managers and Employees

We are facing unprecedented times in our personal and professional lives. This guide is designed to help you connect with your team members through a high-quality conversation.

Conversation Prep

Before you connect with one of your team members, check in with yourself. Are you okay? Are you in the right physical and mental condition to have a conversation right now? Are you able to be present? If not, it might be best to reschedule. Your team will understand if you need to shift the time. If you are ready to have the conversation, make sure you are clear on the most pressing priorities for your team. Aside from support, the most critical need for most employees is understanding how best to prioritize work.

Tips for a Successful Conversation

Listen more than you speak to create space for your employees to share their individual experience

Show empathy and share your own challenges and experience, when appropriate. It is OK to say, "I don't know." If solutions are beyond your ability to help as their manager, connect them to HR and/or employee assistance resources

If meeting virtually, try to be on camera and avoid distractions

Stay on top of communication from leadership to stay aligned with messaging and share relevant resources

As best you can, make sure everyone leaves the conversation with a clear idea of how to prioritize time, which priorities need to shift, and when you'll have the next check-in.

Questions to Ask in Your Next 1:1 Conversation

Whether you are in a manager role or employee, these questions are helpful prompts to create a quality conversation. If you're in a manager role, keep these questions in mind to help guide the conversation. If you're in an employee role, think ahead about how you might answer these questions. If there's a question below that's important to you and it doesn't come up during your conversation, bring it up yourself.

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- 1 How are you doing?

 - 2 How are your family members and loved ones?

 - 3 Reflecting on the past quarter, what are you most proud of?

 - 4 What's one thing I or the team can do to make things easier for you?

 - 5 What other support or resources do you need to help you be successful during this time?

 - 6 How are we doing in terms of communicating and adapting to new workflows and protocols?
What can we do more or less of?
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Post Conversation

After your conversation, make sure to document any action items. In order to encourage good follow-up, try to identify at least one action you can take before your next conversation. It could even be something small like adding the next conversation to the calendar. Small actions are more likely to get done and build to larger change.

Connect, Share, Grow

Connect with your peers and Glint's People Science experts to share challenges, ask questions, and swap experiences in our LinkedIn Group: [People Success Forum: Building the New World of Work](#)