Facing Organizational Uncertainty

With the recent announcement of looming budget cuts, the University is facing a period of economic uncertainty which naturally creates feelings of stress and apprehension or distrust. While the University makes plans to deal with the new financial reality, we are all being asked to continue to provide excellent service and support, and to remain enthusiastic ambassadors in our dealings with colleagues, students and individuals external to the University.

It is important to acknowledge that this uncertainty creates uneasiness for many individuals. Fear of the unknown and potential downsizing is difficult to accept. It is reasonable to expect that under these circumstances, you may find yourself or your colleagues experiencing periods of anxiety, depression, social withdrawal, physical complaints, emotional outbursts, and loss of motivation.

Visualizing the future with the potential of increased workloads and ongoing or heightened anxiety regarding job loss may diminish morale. Especially during trying times, it is important you make self-care a priority. Consider engaging in the following:

- Talk to someone about your feelings
- Be proactive and informed during the process of change
- Recognize that there is not enough time to do everything. Prioritize what is important to do and then do it!
- Be positive and realistic in your work expectations of yourself and others
- Review and remind yourself of tools you have used in the past to cope with uncertainty
- Take a break from your daily activities and attend a Lunch and Learn session or a workshop

If you are in a leadership role it is important to provide the following to your working group:

- Inform staff members as information is available (even if you are updating them that no new information is available)
- Find ways to manage workload changes by adjusting priorities and timelines
- Acknowledge that people may struggle so ensure information on resources and supports (such as EFAP services or HPaWS) are available within your work area
- Keep staff members informed of good news in the organization

During times of uncertainty it is important to identify what we can control and not dwell on what we do not have control over. For the things we cannot control, try to focus energy elsewhere and seek advice on guidance managing the stress.

Contact Information

Health Promotion and WorkLife Services
780.492.7124
www.hrs.ualberta.ca/worklife

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
Homewood Human Solutions
780.428.7587
www.hrs.ualberta.ca/efap