

An Emphasis on Empathy during COVID-19

In our current environment, we are presented with the task of acting decisively and resolving complex problems. We are also working with many stakeholders who have different values and priorities in our ever-changing situation. To create solutions, we must focus on transparency, over-communicating and inclusion through empathy.

Inclusion refers to cultivating a healthy, high performing environment where behaviors and social norms make people feel welcome, valued, respected, and engaged. An inclusive workplace is one that provides equitable access to resources and opportunities.

Having an inclusive mindset during times of change or crisis is critical as people become increasingly overwhelmed with feelings of confusion and anxiety. This can cause people to close themselves off and communicate less.

Inclusion through Social Interaction

The emotional implications of working in a new location, under curfews, and being away from family and friends, can have a negative impact on an individual's mental health and wellbeing. Now is the perfect time to adopt new social interaction practices that will help everyone feel more included:

- 1) During team meetings, make sure everyone speaks. This will nudge shy or less experienced members to voice their ideas, while ensuring everyone feels valued.
- 2) To heighten empathy, consider asking your team one of the following questions:
 - What is something you are grateful for today?
 - What is a new action that is working for you at the moment?
 - What is something challenging that you are struggling with?
(With the follow up question, how can we help?)
- 3) Remember that no two people are alike. Avoid grouping others together or making assumptions based on the fact that people might have something in common such as: gender, generation, ability, nationality, or family status.

Leading with Compassion

Remember to use your authority wisely, and to lead with empathy. Make it a point to speak with team members individually, and work towards being vulnerable by sharing something that you are having difficulty with during this time, or working towards improving upon.

As we continue to produce value during this volatile time, inclusion and empathy are more precious than ever. Understand that many people are physically and emotionally strained, while also being separated from family and friends, heightening emotions and the need to feel respected and included at work.

Deploy Plato's famous quote, "Be kind, for everyone is fighting a battle you know nothing about".

We must move forward with kindness, empathy, optimism, and resilience. As leaders, our role is to foster an inclusive, respectful and human approach to how we work and live. It is important to remember we are all leaders and influencers of an inclusive environment. How will you work towards leading with empathy today.

Links and resources

Learn more about [Saud Aramco's Diversity & Inclusion Strategy and Offerings](#).

Watch the brief video below on Managing through Crisis and consider the following:

"Making ethical choices often involves shades of gray. Being open about how and why you make decisions leads to principles that others are more likely to understand and follow." When we face tough business decisions that have more broad-reaching social implications, are we properly balancing our need to maintain operational resilience with empathy, compassion, and the employee experience?

Click [here](#) to access the video below.

