

## Quick Guide

### Well-being Huddle

#### Check-in Questions to Promote Well-being

##### PURPOSE

Communicating and connecting with our employees is critical for a sense of team belonging and cohesiveness. This is especially true with those who are working remotely as they can feel isolated and removed from that former sense of connectedness that was an integral part of the UW-Madison culture.

Best practices suggest that regular departmental meetings or team huddles are critical. Besides providing a way to disseminate information to employees, it is a key tool to maintain team belonging, check the emotional pulse of the Team, and emphasize the role of self-care in maintaining personal well-being.

The goal of a well-being check-in is not to “fix” the issues but rather to provide a format for listening, validating, and providing a forum for other team members support each other during these times of persistent uncertainty.

##### HOW TO LEAD A CHECK-IN

1. As part of your agenda, set a time (10 minutes or so) to pose a question to your team and then listen.
2. Create a ground rule that this is a [psychologically safe place](#) where people are free to share their thoughts and feelings without judgement. (Psychological safety is the concept that you won't be embarrassed, punished, or humiliated for being vulnerable by speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes.)
3. **Listening without fixing:** It is not a time to “fix” things but rather to hear how people are doing in terms of their well-being and coping. Listen and thank people for sharing personal issues and professional concerns. That creates a psychologically safe space and “no judgement” zone.
4. If this meeting is held virtually, specifically during this part of the agenda, set the expectation that whenever possible that employees are on camera. This is helpful to create a connection when people are sharing and to allow the leader to check-in on the non-verbal aspects of the communication of status.
5. Enjoy the moments when pets or kids might accidentally make an appearance. It makes things more human.
6. Thank the Team for their willingness to be vulnerable and candid. These are difficult times.
7. After each session remind the Team of the many UW-Madison resources available for support.
8. If you hear something that is alarming, follow up privately with that employee as you normally would.

## Script for Introducing a Check-in

Let's do a check-in.

The prompt for today is \_\_\_\_\_  
(choose from the list below).

Everyone pause for a moment to think of your response and what you would want to share with each other. Please remember that you do not have to check-in and can simply say "pass" when it's your turn.

## Sample Check-in Questions

- Give me one word that describes how you are feeling at this point (feel free to tell why you chose this word)
- The road to Burnout has been described by walking with a pebble in your shoe. In terms of our work and workflow, what is the pebble in your shoe?
- More than ever, we need to intentionally take care of ourselves to be our best. What is one thing that you do for self-care that has been helpful?
- What is one thing that went well (yesterday, during your shift, etc.)?

UW-Madison Resources:

<https://hr.wisc.edu/employee-assistance-office/>

<https://ombuds.wisc.edu/>

<https://hr.wisc.edu/employee-assistance-office/lifematters/>

<https://hr.wisc.edu/international/>

<https://employeedisabilities.wisc.edu/>