Metro North Hospital and Health Service *Putting people first*

Working From Home

Tips for success for your team

Purpose of this document

As COVID-19 continues to impact Metro North, we're taking actions to support efforts to curtail the spread, including shifting to flexible-working arrangements and working from home where possible.

This document is intended to serve as a guide for success with these arrangements

- Best practices in working remotely
- Tips for Success to manage teams and work effectively and with ease while not in the traditional workplace
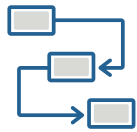
Every situation is different. It is important to build the right model for your team consistent with our Metro North values

- This document will help inform discussions with your team

Experience shows that just a handful of practices support successful working from home and health service delivery
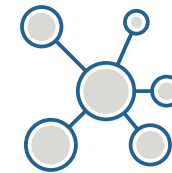
Construct

1 Clarify expectations for your team while they're working from home

2 Establish processes for monitoring work and planning for work outputs

Communicate

3 Define the team's working from home model

4 Ensure easy access to information across teams and other departments where appropriate

Connect

5 Mimic in-office interactions while people are working from home to maintain cohesiveness and morale
For example, a virtual 10 minute morning tea break for a team members birthday

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# 1. Clarify expectations for working from home to maximize effectiveness

Establish team working norms

- Working hours and breaks
- Expectations about responsiveness (e.g., email responded within X time, if urgent – SMS)
- Put in place mechanism for feedback

Establish a working space & norms

- Ensure security of the home workspace (e.g. shared space ok?)
- Set in place plans to manage home obligations, including childcare, eldercare, and pets
  - Seek outside support and, if limited, team leaders and team members work together to balance business and personal needs
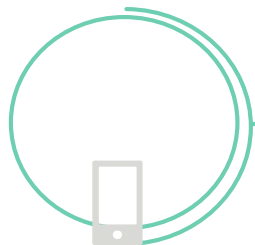
Establish technology norms

- Video expectations: this may depend on bandwidth availability
- Audio preferences: laptop or phone? mute when quiet?
- Screen sharing vs. not
- Role of chat / messaging during meetings

Example norms for working from home teams

Example

Trust and teaming

- Trust your team members to make this new way of working work
- Encourage your team members to always ask for help and speak up if something isn't working
- Acknowledge the positives and celebrate personal accomplishment and team milestones

Engagement

- Everyone can communicate with everyone with technology and tools (computer, phone, OneDrive/etc.)
- The whole team has agreed to be fully invested in the working from home process

Agree and set guidelines for time and location

- Team members work from home according to pre-arranged plans which are well communicated to all team members
- Any changes to working from home arrangements to be communicated as soon as possible
- Standard day / shift lengths are to be followed by whole team

Virtual teaming

- Virtual meetings use technology appropriate for your team (teleconference/Microsoft Teams/Zoom etc.)
- For all matters that require an immediate response, phone call or text is the best way to get in touch
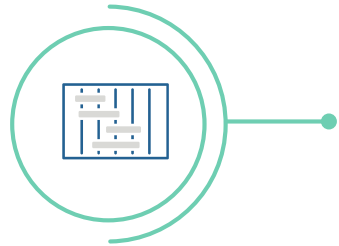- Online: e-mail responses expected within agreed timeframe, even just acknowledgment of receipt
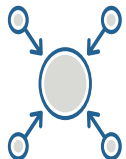
Centralised information

- All documents stored and shared in shared folder (OneDrive/etc.)
- Team members proactive in content sharing/context setting/keeping team aligned using digital tools

2. Create a productive work environment

Create a new routine

- Boundaries between work and life may become blurry when working from home so get up, get ready, and get going as if you were preparing for a normal day in the office

Establish a working space

- Ideally this is a place you don't go to relax, like your bedroom or sofa

- It should also be a place that other members of your household know is designated for work

Build in breaks

- When we work in an office, we walk to get food, chat with our co-workers, go out for coffee, and get up from our desks

- It is easy to burn out if you don't remind yourself to take breaks or get up to move around when you're working from home

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3. Establish processes for planning work and team deliverables, and set out how it will look:

Team leadership

- Set clear expectations
  - When working from home, do not leave things open to interpretation
  - Set expectations - What is the deliverable? When is it due? Who owns it?

- Increase touchpoints with team members and stakeholders
  - Ensure strong verbal feedback loop during work hours
  - Maintain relationship discussions – the phone is best for this

- Schedule catch ups with your team members
  - Compensate for loss of ad-hoc interactions from co-location
  - Show that you are still close to your team

- Agree on what "urgent" means

- Set standards for typical communication, e.g. feedback shared in shared folder, documents sent 'X' time ahead of meeting
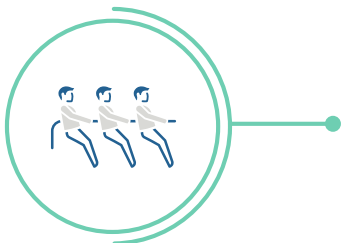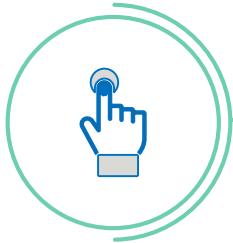
Direct / lead your team members

- Full team daily (virtual) meetings, consider check-in and check-out discussions/emails with managers and colleagues

- Set clear deadlines & stick to them (discuss proactively if anything needs to change)

4. Ensure easy access to information for your teams and across Metro North

**Leverage cloud-based file sharing tools, like OneDrive, to ensure access to current information**

- Create shared folders that all can access for real-time information
- This also helps to minimise version control issues
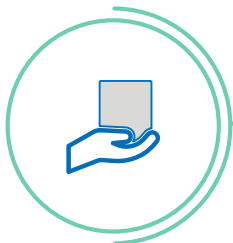
Contact QH IT Help Desk 1800 198 175

- Arrange access to any enterprise systems your team members will need while working from home
- Discuss options for accessing information on QHEP's
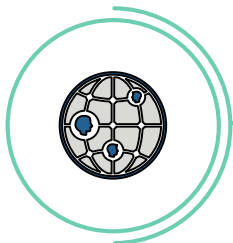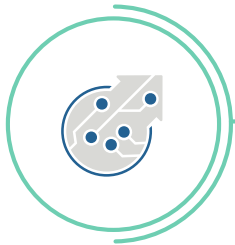
When in doubt, over-communicate

- On progress, deliverables, urgent matters, inspiring content
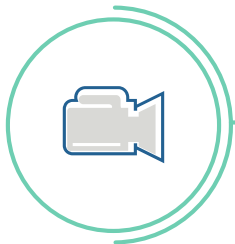- To build trust & reassure your team that everybody continues to work productively

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5. Use digital 'teaming tools' where possible

Use Microsoft Teams to mimic your traditional workplace

- Use Microsoft Teams to enhance real-time sharing and cut through siloed communication

Use video conference tools

- Tools like Zoom can be useful here but will depend on bandwidth availability of team members. If not possible, a simple teleconference works well

Shared Folders & One Drive for central information access

- Use Shared Folders (OneDrive etc.) so everyone can access the information and files they need

6. Maintain your traditional in-office interactions to help with moral and any isolation issues

- Have team conversations on teleconferences
  - This increases visibility to overall work of the team
- Preserve the ability for your team members to disconnect and 'go home' vs. always at 'office'

Encourage "virtual water cooler" communication, e.g.:

- Without "water cooler" conversations, it can be hard to connect with one another
- A good way to do this is to add a buffer before/after meetings to allow for informal relationship building and information sharing across your team members

Promote spontaneous & positive interactions across your team
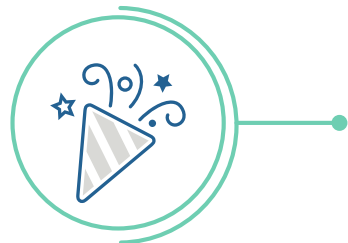
- Celebrate team milestones, personal accomplishments, etc.
- Promote spontaneous interaction (for example: check-in calls, eating 'together')

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7. Encourage your team to interact as if they are still in the office

Some ideas:

…during teleconference etc.
- What did your kids do today? What are you doing to keep fit and healthy?
- How you are spending your commuting time?
- Checking in on those team members in isolation

… In between
- Share fun facts about each other
- Share tips/hacks for working from home

Three principles to successfully doing this:

1. Actively drive it—don't assume it will come automatically

2. Make it a routine—create time for it every meeting

3. Hold people accountable for doing it

Getting started checklist

Set foundation for success
- ❑ Install, gain access-to, and test digital collaboration and information access tools;
- ❑ **Schedule explicit check-ins among the team**
- ❑ Set up comfortable/productive work from home space (e.g. clear reception, internet, appropriate physical space)

Begin to execute differently
- ❑ Keep your calendar up-to-date and be explicit about what your day looks like
- ❑ Proactively use 1:1 check ins to maintain your team members' engagement
- ❑ Regularly revise what is working / not working, and adjust as needed for continuous improvement

Embrace technology
- ❑ Turn on your Zoom/Teams video for engagements whenever possible (1:1s too)
- ❑ Begin (or continue) using shared folders (OneDrive, etc.) as master data / working file repository
- ❑ Set your IT preferences in the systems you're using for optimal performance

Some final tips:

❑ Appoint team leads to plan **and support ongoing** working from home model for the COVID-19 period

❑ Communicate with your team your enthusiasm for making a new model work and model your commitment to it

❑ Reinforce the flexibility & empowerment that working from home can give your teams

❑ Identify where IT training will help you support your team

When executed thoughtfully, working from home can be highly successful and result in outstanding service delivery **from your team for Metro North**

COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

And last but not least …
Trust that people will get their
work done and will
raise their hands if they can't