



# MANAGING EXPECTATIONS



Under normal circumstances, it may make sense to expect that you keep the level of deliverables the same regardless of whether you are working from home or in the office. However, during a global pandemic, people need to be more flexible with each other and themselves. You may be trying to help your kids continue to learn while maintaining your job or perhaps sharing space and resources with a spouse, partner or roommates. You may be trying to salvage your work and financial stability, maybe even adding a second job to subsidize. You may be in the healthcare or public health space and finding yourself on the front lines of this pandemic.

The reality is that people are dealing with a lot right now, and it is not realistic for us to be able to double our workload and maintain the same output. Perhaps someone can do so for a day or a week, and some tasks or obligations might require you to do so from time to time, but you will eventually experience burnout. Here are some ways that you can proactively manage what is being expected of you during this difficult time.

## Adjust How You Think About a Work Day

One silver lining in all of this is that technological advancements now allow many of us to do work from virtually anywhere. For most computer-based or collaborative work, the reality is that it can happen anywhere, any time. During the pandemic, it will be helpful to discuss with your manager and team members what their thoughts are for completing work within a more fluid and flexible time frame. For example, if you or your coworkers are having to provide school lessons for kids in the middle of the day, you may need to work after hours to complete some tasks.

As you begin to think about how to have a conversation with your manager about expectations for what your work day will look like, take heart that he or she is probably already thinking about how to shift expectations as well. This can be a great opportunity for you to build a healthier work relationship where you have some capacity to influence, moderate, and co-determine work outcomes.

## 4 Great Ideas to Help Manage Expectations

- » **Focus on mission critical performance deliverables** rather than specific work hours. This demonstrates that you understand what absolutely has to get done, and you have thought about how to execute it.
- » **Talk with your manager about benchmarks of work rather than logging tasks.** While it may seem tempting to log how you are spending your time on specific tasks, that will just create more work that may get in the way of executing critical performance deliverables. Suggest a discussion of daily or weekly milestones so you and your manager are both confident that you are proactively tracking toward success.
- » **Ask your boss to provide clarity** about “mission critical” benchmarks for each week. Suggest a series of Monday meetings to review them quickly together.
- » **Discuss more fluid needs for work deliverables.** For example, if you are working with your kids at home, you may want to let your boss know that you will be available throughout the standard 9-5 day, but that your focused delivery may happen later in the evening after kids go to bed.