



Supervisory Newsletter February 2024 | Issue 24

Connection

"Think back to the most important experiences of your life, the highest highs, the greatest victories, the most daunting obstacles overcome. How many happened to you alone? I bet there are very few. When you understand that being connected to others is one of life's greatest joys, you realize that life's best comes when you initiate and invest in solid relationships."

-John C. Maxwell

It is hard to know what exactly makes a workplace exceptional. We've all worked on some teams that have drained us of all energy and burned us out. But there are also those teams that energize us, that create a flow of innovative ideas and passion for our work. What is the cause for these extraordinary teams? **It's all about the connections.**

It's undeniable that employees perform at their best when they work on a team that is well connected. From a study conducted by [Enboarder](#), 94% of employees are more productive when they feel connected to their colleagues. Feeling connected to your supervisor, your peers, and the people you serve has a profound impact on productivity, health, and overall happiness inside (and outside) of the job.

The issue is that we're struggling with creating a workplace that is well-connected. According to the [American Psychological Association's 2023 Work in America workforce survey](#), 94% of respondents reported that it's somewhat or very important to them that their workplace be somewhere they feel they belong. The article goes on to share the five workplace essentials identified by the U.S. surgeon general for workers' psychological health and well-being, which includes connection and community. The article also identifies, from their 2023 survey, that 25% of fully in-person workers reported feelings of loneliness and isolation.

We can lead this change to help our teams become more connected so that we are at our best. Included in this newsletter are some ideas and resources to apply with your crew this month. Try some new things and see what happens with your staff!

The sense of connection in your team and office will positively impact performance.

Until next month! Let us know what you think about this newsletter and what you'd like to see in the future!

[Jesse Heath](#)
Employee Relations Coordinator
[HRS Employee Relations](#)

Feedback Form

Is your team culture one that helps energize your staff or is it draining?

To better understand the type of culture you're working with, look at the predominant attitudes, use of language, and behaviors. While groups on campus have mission statements in terms of what culture looks like, you need to see how it lives and breathes with your staff.

As the leader of your team, this is likely an uncomfortable assessment.

That's okay!

Even if your culture leans more toward control or indifference, there are actions you can take to help promote a sense of connection!

Control: People who have power, influence, and status rule over the rest. They expect people to follow orders without asking questions. If you were seen to push back, even if you've asked a legitimate question, you may find yourself publicly belittled or mocked. People may feel micromanaged, criticized, or disrespected. People develop "learned helplessness," meaning they don't have the autonomy to do their jobs well so they go through the motions without extra effort.

Indifference: People are so busy they don't have time to develop supportive relationships. Some leaders don't see the value in the relational nature of work. People may feel lonely, unsupported, or like they're being treated as a means to an end rather than as a unique individual. People working in this culture lack the energy to do their best.

Connection: People feel connected to their supervisor and colleagues whether working onsite or remotely. They feel connected to their work because it's a good fit with their strengths and provides the right degree of challenge. They have the enthusiasm and energy to do their best work. People are willing to help out, information is freely shared and discussed, and people will be recognized for their contributions. Supervisors will get people in roles where they thrive and they'll invest in mentoring and training to help people achieve their potential.

PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL TRAINING

Learn more about the performance review process and how to write an evaluation that will help your staff grow!

Tuesday, February 27, from 1-2pm on Zoom
Use the link at the bottom of the newsletter to register!

Don't wait!

P&S Appraisals are due by **May 17**.

See the full suggested timeline by clicking on the button.

Suggested P&S Appraisal Timeline

Drive Connection with Vision!

People feel more connected when they know the answers to these questions:

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| <p>Who Are We?
What are the core values we believe in and guide how we do our work?</p> | <p>Where are We Going?
What are we trying to accomplish in the next year and beyond?</p> |
| <p>Why Is It Important?
How does our work make a positive difference to others?</p> | <p>How Are We Getting There?
Share the top three priorities that will help you achieve your mission for the year.</p> |

When employees live out a vision, mission, and values that inspire and unite them, it produces a reputation they're proud of. When people feel proud of their reputation, they become more connected. Communicate your vision and work to make progress toward it; it'll result in greater performance and connection with your team.

Boost Connection with Value

Value exists in an organization when everyone understands the needs of people, appreciates their positive unique contributions, and helps them achieve their potential. In a connection culture, people understand and embrace that humans have needs that must be met in order to thrive in their work. These are respect, recognition, belonging, autonomy, personal growth, meaning, and progress.

<p>5:1 Positivity Ratio Research has shown that relationships are not likely to survive unless they have a positive to negative ratio of at least five to one. This means that you need multiple positive interactions for every one negative interaction. When is the last time you told your team what they were doing well?</p>	<p>Get to Know People's Stories How well do you know your colleagues? To build a bridge of connection, look for things you have in common. It may surprise you how identifying similarities opens up the working relationship a bit more. Why are they in their current role? How does your why align with theirs?</p>
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Spread Connection with Voice

Voice exists in an organization when everyone seeks the ideas of others, shares their ideas and opinions honestly, and safeguards relational connections.

In a group that has a strong element of voice, you will see the character strength of humility. Decision makers know they don't have a monopoly on good ideas, so they're in the habit of seeking the ideas and opinions of others then considering them before making decisions.

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| <p>You will see honesty. People say what they believe rather than just what they think the other person wants to hear.</p> | <p>You will see consideration of others and forgiveness. People safeguard relational connections.</p> |
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EXPERT INSIGHTS

Michael Lee Stallard

Video: How To Hold A Knowledge Flow Session / Michael Lee Stallard (1:45)

Supervisor To-Dos

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| <p>Reflect on Team Culture
Does your leadership create a connection culture?
Identify how your shared vision with the team can inspire connections.
Do you have a vision?
How do you show your staff that they are valued?</p> | <p>Provide Your Team with a Voice
Host a knowledge flow session with your staff. What ideas and insights do they have to improve your team?

Provide an open platform to let your supervisees share their thoughts candidly to help identify ways to strengthen your team and department.</p> |
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Questions for Connection

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| <p>For Your Reflection
How has your leadership impacted connection on your team?
How do you feel you have encouraged connections and collaborations on your team?</p> | <p>For Staff 1:1s
Do they feel comfortable with the amount of connections they have?
Do they feel that their contributions to the team is valuable?</p> | <p>For Staff Meeting
How can the team encourage collaboration and connection?
What can the staff do to build stronger connections and mentorships with one another?</p> |
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Additional Resources for Connection

Articles

[How a Sense of Belonging Strengthens the Workplace - SHRM](#)
[Facing The Loneliness Epidemic at Work - Forbes](#)
[Employees Are Lonelier Than Ever. How Employers Can Help - Harvard Business Review](#)
[The Increasing Importance of a Best Friend at Work - Gallup](#)

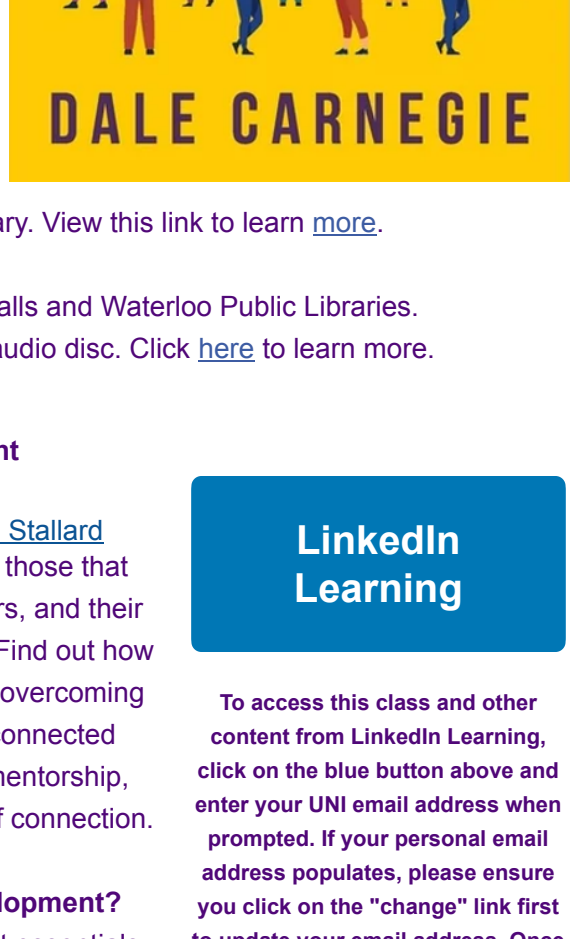
Videos

[How to Avoid Catching Prickly Emotions From Other People - Jessica Garza \(10:59\)](#)
[10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation - Celeste Headlee \(11:21\)](#)
[Advice for Creating a Culture of Belonging - Melonie Parker & Sherrell Dorsey \(19:39\)](#)
[How Everyday Interactions Shape Your Future - Mesmin Destin \(16:35\)](#)

Read Recommendation
How to Win Friends & Influence People by Dale Carnegie

Most of us strive to be supervisors who are magnetic and make a meaningful impact on those who we manage. This book is a comprehensive guide that will help you through everyday relational problems and make success look easier! While this book covers many tips for personal success, many of its lessons can be applied to the workplace and increasing connections with those around you. Help cultivate a workplace that prioritizes connection!

Notable Quotable:
"You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you."



This title is available at Rod Library. View this link to learn [more](#).

This title is available at the Cedar Falls and Waterloo Public Libraries. Available as a physical book and an audio disc. Click [here](#) to learn more.

LinkedIn Learning Class Highlight

[Creating a Connection Culture](#) by Michael Lee Stallard

When it comes to connection, the best ones are those that connect people to the organization, their peers, and their work in key ways that enhance performance. Find out how to sustain your culture of connection through overcoming common obstacles, developing a plan for connected leadership, increasing connection through mentorship, measuring connection, and celebrating acts of connection.

Looking for additional professional development? From communication strategies, management essentials, and technological skills, there is something for everyone on LinkedIn Learning! You have full access with your account through UNI so explore available courses to continue your professional growth journey!

LinkedIn Learning

To access this class and other content from LinkedIn Learning, click on the blue button above and enter your UNI email address when prompted. If your personal email address populates, please ensure you click on the "change" link first to update your email address. Once entered, click on "Continue to the University of Northern Iowa LinkedIn Learning account" to access content.

You made it to the end of the newsletter! Thanks for reading! Please complete the

Supervisory Newsletter Feedback Form

UPCOMING LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT

Performance Appraisal Training - Supervisor Virtual Workshop
Tuesday, February 27, 2024, from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM on Zoom

Writing evaluations can be challenging and HRS is here to help with the process. In addition to reviewing the suggested timeline for P&S appraisals and reviewing the submission form, this workshop will provide tips on how to create an effective appraisal.

Register Here

Fundamentals of Supervision - Supervisor Development Series
Wednesday, April 3, 2024, from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM in Gilchrist 009

This introductory training session is the first in the Supervisor Development Series (SDS). This interactive session will focus on the fundamentals of supervision. This training is recommended for those who supervise Merit and/or P&S staff but ALL supervisors are encouraged and welcome to attend. While priority registration based on capacity is given to current supervisors, this training may be shared with employees looking to promote into leadership roles. Duration is 5.5 hours with a 10-minute break and a 30-minute lunch. Offered in-person only

Register Here

Supporting Someone Who is Grieving - My Well-Being
Wednesday, April 3, 2024, at 10:00am in State College Room, MAU

Human Resource Services will host a session led by Cedar Valley Hospice. Cedar Valley Hospice counselors will provide information on how to support someone who is grieving and resources available in the community. Please register in advance.

Register Here

FMLA and ADA Supervisor Responsibilities

This training is available on-demand via Blackboard. Please click on the linked course name above to access this session.

This session provides supervisors with high-level information about how to identify a potential leave or accommodation request from an employee, and clarifies a supervisor's role in complying with the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This training takes approximately 45-minutes and will save your progress if you are unable to finish in one sitting.

Supervisor Development Series: FLSA/Time-Reporting

While no sessions are currently being scheduled, we highly encourage you to visit our FLSA resources webpage and review the information at <https://hrs.uni.edu/supervisors/flsa>. Additionally, you may review OBOs time reporting resources at <https://obo.uni.edu/payroll/time-reporting>.

COMING SOON

The Power of Gratitude and Recognition - Supervisor Development Series

Our Vision

All employees will be positively engaged in achieving their greatest potential while contributing to the success of the university.

Our Mission

Human Resource Services fosters an environment of integrity and collaboration through innovative solutions and communications contributing to the successful recruitment, development, and retention of university employees.