



Affirming Members of Your Team

During a major crisis, individual employees are impacted in different ways, and across your team each individual will experience the crisis differently due to their own unique set of identities and needs. The diversity within groups creates an environment where people's *relationship* to the social issues and current challenges are different. In addition, your team members will understand the issues in different ways and have varying perspectives. It is important to be aware of these dynamics and to be able to affirm what people are experiencing and feeling—even when it is new, different or unfamiliar to yourself. Team members who feel affirmed and valued are more likely to feel a sense of belonging, a sense of worth, and to see themselves as a part of the team.

Techniques for Micro-Affirmations

1 Listen Actively

Focus on what is being shared that is of meaning to your team members. Also, consider non-verbal gestures and the significance of what is “not” shared when discussing challenging or even polarizing issues.

2 Recognize & Validate

Demonstrate a willingness to explore issues in depth and possible pathways for addressing concerns. Value and acknowledge what is shared and be willing to incorporate their input into next steps.

3 Affirm Emotional Reactions

Take the time to verbally acknowledge the significance of what some may have shared or what someone is feeling. This acknowledgment is also an opportunity to pivot and begin to think about action items in response to what individuals or the group is feeling.



SOURCE: Williams, D. (2020). The COVID-19 DEI Crisis Action Strategy Guide: Recommendations to Drive Inclusive Excellence. Atlanta, GA: Center for Strategic Diversity Leadership & Social Innovation