Looking after your people in a crisis

When your organization is in the midst of crisis it is important to demonstrate that you care. And not just with words, but also with actions and initiatives to support people as they negotiate the stressful situations that crises inevitably present. People want to know that you have their personal welfare at heart, and not just that of the organization.

Make contact
Ensure you have plans for how you will contact people to make sure they are OK, to see what help they need, and to keep them informed.

Recognise that how a person experiences a situation is unique to them
Don’t assume how badly affected a person may be - it depends on so many complex factors.

Get a 360° perspective
What else is going on in someone’s life has a significant impact on how well they will cope with the current situation.

Support middle-managers
Your middle-managers need to be the best leaders they can be – it is through them that all your organization’s efforts are translated.

Understand that people will be at different stages
Recovery is a roller coaster of ups and downs. Foster a culture that is accepting of wherever people are along that journey.

Keep asking
Someone who was coping last week may be falling apart this week – keep tabs on how people are doing.

Demonstrate that you care
This means demonstrating you care not just with words but also with attitudes, behaviours and actions.

Be fair and equitable
Don’t play favorites - try to ensure no parts of the organization are left behind.

Connect people
Find ways to bring people and teams back together. If they can’t meet at work, could they get together in other ways?

Don’t underestimate the time and effort required
When planning for crises, organizations tend to forget to plan for their people. On the Resilient Organisations website we have a free booklet (resorgs.org.nz/staffed-or-stuffed) with more advice on how to look after your people in an extended crisis.