Message from HR Vice President and CHRO Lorraine Goffe

Dear Faculty and Staff,

As you’ll see in this month’s issue, we cover two critical topics. May is mental health awareness month, and it is also time for the University’s year-end performance review process.

We know in our post-pandemic world that employees in organizations across the nation are experiencing mental health challenges. I am pleased to note the number of resources that Northwestern offers to our community in this realm. They are available to you in many formats, as you’ll see below, and we hope you access them as you need them, knowing they are confidential.

Certainly mental health is affected by the workplace and it is understandable that managers and staff alike can feel anxious about having annual review conversations. Again, we offer several resources to help -- and I would encourage you to think of these as give and take conversations regarding accomplishments and goals for the year to come. The idea is for both sides to spend some time preparing for these conversations so they are candid, constructive, and facilitate understanding between the individual and their manager.

Benefits Spotlight

Mental Health Awareness Month
Learn to Live is an online assessment that helps you find programs appropriate for you, with focus areas such as: stress, anxiety, and worry; depression; insomnia; social anxiety; and substance use. See the informational flyer, upcoming webinars, and overview video for more information. Available to those enrolled in any Northwestern BCBSIL PPO plan.

Join Northwestern Sitters & Tutors Network
With summer approaching, why not join NU’s Sitters and Tutors Network, a NetID-protected site where students offer babysitting and tutoring services to the NU community. Parents can post job listings customized to their needs and browse available sitters and tutors, filtering by skillset and schedule. NU faculty, staff, and student parents can search for sitters and tutors. Create your own account and start building connections today.
Planning a Summer Vacation? Remember NU’s Discount Programs
Discounts for hotels, car rentals, entertainment experiences, and more are available through various programs: PerkSpot, LifeMart (through the Care.com membership) and Savings Center (through the Employee Assistance Program).

Your Well-Being

Mental Health Resources
Mental Health Awareness Month is a good opportunity to recognize that mental health conditions are common, and there are a variety of resources available to provide support, including Employee Assistance Program, Faculty Wellness Program, mental health resources, Mental Health First Aid.

Upcoming Mental Health First Aid Training
Mental Health First Aid is a skills-based training that teaches participants about mental health and how to provide initial help and support for someone who may be experiencing a mental health challenge. The full-day training, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., will be held in-person in Chicago on May 23 and in Evanston on June 28.

Take a Well-being Break
Live, virtually facilitated well-being breaks are available each quarter. The spring schedule runs through June 16 and provides stretch, yoga, strength, and cardio sessions, with on-demand recordings also available, including meditation. Consider a break on your own -- go outdoors, turn off or step away from screens, take your entire lunch break, and integrate other practices that work for you.

Learn and Grow

REAL Performance Conversations
Managers and staff members, get ready to make your performance conversations REAL: Reflect, Empathize, Ask Questions, and Look Ahead. As the Performance Excellence (PEX) program year-end approaches, we want to prepare you for productive and meaningful conversations.

The REAL Conversations Planner is a tool for both managers and staff to help craft a conversation and keep things REAL. The goal is to help you reflect on current needs and interests, look ahead to next year, and explore development opportunities.

Does giving feedback make you nervous? Find out how to best structure your feedback here.

Receiving feedback can also present its own challenges. Learn how to receive feedback and maximize your learning here.

Remember: Visit our site to stay up to date on professional development opportunities!
Manager's Tip

You’re not alone if you find it difficult to have difficult conversations! A 2016 Harris Poll found that 69% of surveyed managers said they often feel uncomfortable communicating with employees, and 37% reported feeling uncomfortable with giving direct feedback or criticism. Consider using the L2R2: Listen, Learn, Reflect, Respond framework for difficult conversations. Join our Manager's Corner community to learn about this framework and other insights, and to ask questions.

Updated Staff Handbook Now Available Online

Human Resources is pleased to introduce an updated Staff Handbook. The Staff Handbook is reviewed annually to ensure we continually provide you with the most current information on our policies and programs. View the Staff Handbook to learn more about this year’s updates.

Bike Commuter Challenge

Join fellow NU bikers for this year’s Bike Commuter Challenge through June 11. Each year, Chicagoland organizations compete to see who can earn the most points by commuting via bike. Participating is as easy as signing up, biking to work or school, and logging your rides! Visit sustainNU to access resources and past info sessions and/or attend the Urban Biking FAQ: Bike Commuter Challenge session on Tuesday, May 23 at noon.

Workplace Strategies

Did you know that using one or more Workplace Strategies can benefit your mental health as well as your team’s? Research shows that when people have more autonomy over where, when, and how they work, their overall well-being and ability to manage personal and professional responsibilities improve. If you have questions or want a Workplace Strategies consultation for you or your team, email wellbeing@northwestern.edu.

Inside HR

Congratulations to those employees who celebrated service anniversaries at celebrations on May 1-2. Inside HR, we congratulate four team members who had milestone anniversaries:

- Yvette Davis: 40 years
- Karen Koehler: 30 years
- Beulah Gillett: 25 years
- Julie Phelan: 25 years

*Workplace Strategies photo credit: Unsplash
The mission of Human Resources is to promote an innovative and inclusive workplace where individuals thrive and collaborate to advance Northwestern’s direction.