

How to Help Your Employees During Times of Civil Unrest



In times of civil unrest, the most important step a company can take is to recognize that work life does not go on as normal.

For a period of time after a heightened civil unrest, especially if the event is violent, the situation deserves special consideration and requires a response by management.

The personality and life experiences of each employee within the workplace influences other's responses to the event. Try to avoid projecting your interpretation of how someone "should" respond. You don't know all the factors that may be influencing another person's feelings.

Preoccupation, disorganization, and even episodes of emotional distress may occur. Employees will respond, process and recover at different stages. Company leadership should address issues in a timely manner and allow for appropriate recovery time for each employees.

What Managers Can Do:

1) Let your employees know you care about helping them deal with the experience. Avoid telling them the event is over and "to move on." Comments like that make some employees think their feelings are unwarranted.

2) Realize that anxiety, anger, guilt, and blame are common reactions to activity surrounding a protest or riot. It's human nature to look for something or someone to blame. Help them work through these feelings by listening.

3) Acknowledge that employees may respond with frustration or anger if they don't feel supported by management. They may also direct their anger at other employees. Try to be understanding and defuse these emotions. Sympathy conveys agreement and empathy conveys understanding.

4) Know that employees may turn inward, isolate, and refuse to talk about the event. Remind employees that painful or confusing emotions are normal and should be processed with someone they trust.

5) Use Best Care EAP! Arrange for an onsite Critical Incident Response/debriefing for employees or, schedule a training program related to workplace respect and communication to foster inclusivity and help employees cope.

Encourage employees to schedule an appointment with a counselor by completing our [Counseling Registration Form](#) found at www.bestcareeap.org under the Forms tab. If there are issues with the form, call Best Care EAP at (402) 354-8000 or (800) 801-4182. we'll be glad to help.



What managers and supervisors can do to take care of themselves.

Supervisors can be at great behavioral or emotional risk as they work through civil unrest events because of the pressure to appear in control of the situation. Remember that you also need to take care of yourself as you process the event(s).

What You Can Do

- 1) Seek out additional managers, including HR leaders, for support and assistance with managing circumstances for others and for your own emotions.
- 2) You, just like your employees, are valued and will be supported by your organization as everyone works to recover from the event(s).
- 3) Remember to call Best Care EAP and arrange for Critical Incident Support and/or to refer employees who need specialized assistance for emotional help. Please direct employees to complete the **Counseling Registration Form** found under the Forms tab at www.bestcareeap.org. If there are issues with the form, the individual may call Best Care EAP at (402) 354-8000 or (800) 801-4182 and we'll be glad to help.

Additional trauma information can be found in our **Resource Hub**.