**Being A Manager For A Parent In Times Of COVID-19**

COVID-19 has been difficult for all of us on many different levels. For our Spotifiers who are parents, it has presented a unique set of challenges as many schools, preschools, and daycare centers around the world are being closed or are adopting a remote learning environment. This means that our working parents have to juggle work, meetings, and deadlines while also caring for their children and/or homeschooling. This makes for extremely long days.

The Parents ERG conducted a survey in September to assess how parents have been coping. One of the things that came through loud and clear is that they’re looking for more consistent support, flexibility, and empathy from their managers.

We have developed this set of best practices to help managers handle flex time, workload, and potential burn out.

* Meetings. Allow your employees to skip meetings or to dip in and out of a call because they need to care for their children.
* Flexible working hours. Support your employees to find a working schedule that allows them to care for their children while getting the work done.
* Paid time off (PTO/vacation days). Encourage and approve time off so that your employees can take vacation days and parental leave days (if they still have this left), so they can fully focus on other family planning activities (e.g., childcare).
* Practical check-in. Have continual discussions around your employee's workload and if there are possible ways to divide or help prioritize tasks if they want to.
* Wellbeing check-in. Go beyond the typical “How are you?” and try to put yourself in that person's shoes. Allow time for deeper discussions on mental well being.
* Mental health support. Provide and encourage your employees to explore our [mental health resources](https://confluence.spotify.net/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=49972287).
  + [Caring for your team’s mental wellbeing when they’re WFH](https://docs.google.com/document/d/19kn5Aa-K3fS-0TaCPQXgLTmVBZDTNCsISyNMwA5WJ6o/edit#heading=h.f6txi7m9z161)
  + [Early signs of mental health issues](https://confluence.spotify.net/handbook/for-managers/mental-health/overview-of-mental-health)
  + [Supporting a colleague in a mental health crisis](https://confluence.spotify.net/handbook/policies/global-policies/supporting-a-colleague-in-a-mental-health-crisis)
  + [How to have a mental health discussion with a colleague](https://confluence.spotify.net/handbook/for-managers/mental-health/creating-a-safe-environment-at-work)
* Acknowledge. Being a parent in these times is difficult and demanding.  There could be feelings of isolation, lack of flexibility (e.g., need to reschedule a meeting), and having little or no time to recover. It can put enormous pressure and stress on your employee. Acknowledge their situation and the double-work they are doing.
* Accept and sympathize. Both parents and non-parents are affected by the COVID-19 situation. We all have different ways to tackle it and we all need different support. Don’t compare your colleagues with one another, nor yourself. Accept that we all have different issues in these hard times.

If you – as a manager of a working parent – need additional support, reach out to your [HRBP](https://confluence.spotify.net/handbook/for-everyone/who-we-are/hr-contacts).

Additional resources can also be found in the [Leading in Uncertainty](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ZlOcR4Yk_QFTYm3jjsGUbdXYc2p9GRs-FL0mxJDerTI/edit#slide=id.p) guide.