

Stay Strong, Stay Standing

Crisis-management workshop series for YLOs and CBOs to address operational needs during COVID

Key Takeaways from Session 1: Safety First

1) FIGHT MISINFORMATION

- **Share accurate information** about COVID, how it spreads, and that *anyone can get it*. **Socialize reliable resources**, such as the [World Health Organization's Mythbusters page](#). Proactively protect those who contract COVID from being stigmatized by others by sharing the facts.
- **Encourage proven prevention measures**, and require following these measures while working.

2) KEEP LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN

- Consider holding **regular virtual meetings** to keep everyone updated, try to invite public health officials to provide information, and select a main point of contact on your team. **Follow-up** with staff who don't participate.
- **Be transparent about the social and economic impact** of COVID, and that some organizational activities cannot take place safely.
- **Communicate donor responsibility** to your staff so they understand where and how COVID is impacting the organization. If laying off staff, be clear about the economic reasons, not performance.

3) SUPPORT YOUR STAFF'S MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

- **Be flexible with work hours**, allowing staff to work non-traditional hours and on weekends to allow them time to take care of personal responsibilities. Some people may want to stay busy to keep their mental health in check, while others need more time to themselves.
- **Check in on everyone's mental health** during meetings, and assure them that the organization from the top down is invested in their health and safety. Instill a culture of care—it can be hard to know how people are feeling since you aren't seeing them in person, so open communication is essential.
- **Stay connected** with other organizations you work with regularly. If your organization is part of a Coalition, keep up with other organization through videos and social media. Seek out Coalitions via FP2020, the IAWG ASRH Sub-Working Group, Compact for Young People, etc.

4) COMMUNICATE WITH DONORS EARLY AND OFTEN

- Inform donors of your organization's financial situation in light of COVID, and get their approval for any staff adjustments that need to be made. **Don't be shy** in communicating concerns with your donors.
- Submit a proposal with **adjusted workplan activities due to and in response to COVID**.

5) HELP YOUR STAFF ADJUST TO VIRTUAL WORK

- To the extent possible, **purchase any necessary equipment for staff**, such as internet or phone cards. Check in with staff regularly on difficulties and questions.
- **Be flexible!** Keep staff accountable by giving them the space to carry out activities when they can. Identify alternative streams of income if needed, such as mask or soap making.
- **Utilize virtual platforms** to the extent possible for any convenings originally meant to be in-person. For many staff, this might be the first time they've been asked to work remotely. **Recognize this learning curve and provide learning opportunities**.

6) GO BACK TO THE OFFICE SAFELY

- **Implement safety policies** if they don't already exist: many organizations already have policies in place that can be adapted to your organizational context. Follow [WHO guidelines for returning safely](#).
 - **Return in phases**: allowing you to learn new ways of working & safety measures in smaller numbers.
 - **Manage anxiety around safety in the office**, adjusting to a 'new normal', and commuting—some staff will be eager to return while for others this decisions causes unease. Talk to staff individually.
 - **Safety is most important!** Particularly as the general population relaxes safety measures prematurely, keeping your staff healthy and informed of the risks is key.
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