Pandemic Reactions and Responses

The Psychology behind Reactions:

1. Conflicting messages and a lack of clear direction lead to resorting to the extreme to be on the safe side, we default to covering all possible contingencies (ie: toilet paper).
2. Panic buying leads to empty shelves which leads to panic buying. If you weren’t panicking but see empty shelves, you panic because you didn’t panic.
3. Human nature is to over-prepare as it is somewhat practical. Being over-prepared has rewards, being underprepared can be disastrous.
4. Over-preparing gives people a sense of control in the midst of anticipatory anxiety. When people don’t know what to expect, they feel better if they have covered everything they could think of.

Responses for leadership and peers:

1. Acknowledge the concern and attempts to manage it.
2. Do not judge, criticize, or ridicule fears or attempts to prepare.
3. Be as transparent and forthcoming as possible with information.
4. Provide factual reliable sources of additional information.
5. Answer questions. Do not dismiss them. If you don’t know the answer, say so.
6. Help with problem solving.
7. Stay in contact, circle back, and check in frequently.
8. Refer folks who are really struggling to EAP for resources, support and assistance with stress and coping.

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