Close your eyes for a minute and think about the last time you started a new job.

All the excitement you had.

All the uncertainty you had.

Your many questions.

Your many hopes.

That awkward first day.

What do you wish had been different?

What would have made that experience more effective for you?

Okay, open your eyes.

Whether that experience was a long time ago or recent, we very quickly and very easily forget what that experience is like. How uncomfortable it can be when we're just starting out.

20% of turnover happens in the first 45 days.

Remember turnover is people who are willingly leaving your organization. What happens from the first day they walk through your door filled with excitement until 45 days later when they walk back out?

Sometimes it's things outside of your control.

They got another offer.

There's a family emergency.

They're moving across the country.

But many times it's because the job they thought they were getting is not the job that they got.

That's why during the process of hiring and interviewing and recruiting and every step along the way you want to be as honest and transparent as you possibly can so that when people walk through that door, they know what to expect. You want to prepare them before they even walk through the door.

Email them ahead of time. Let them know things that you forget they don't know like where they can park or what's the closest bus stop or Metro stop.

Do they need a badge to get in or a code for the door?

Should they bring their own lunch or will you treat and if you do what sort of dietary restrictions do they have?

Do they need to bring certain paperwork?

The logistics of the day but also the excitement of the day.

Reiterate over and over again throughout the hiring process when you give them the offer, when they accept the offer, the day before they come, the day they show up, how very excited you are to have them as part of your team. Create that level of excitement and keep it going the whole time they work for you.

When they walk through the door, have somebody there to greet them.

I can still remember the moments on jobs when I walked in and there was nobody there. I didn't know who to call. I didn't have a phone number or somebody was late. Talk about awkward and uncomfortable and feeling unwelcome.

I also can think of a job on my first day when there was no key for my office door. My computer didn't work. I didn't have a phone yet. I didn't have a schedule set up.My boss wasn't there and I literally sat at my desk and didn't know what to do.

 That is not the way to welcome someone to your team.

 Be prepared for everything they need. If you do business cards, have the business cards ready for them. Have the passwords ready. Have someone to greet them. Make that first day as welcoming as possible. Include them with what is going on.

They're not going to understand everything in the beginning but make them feel included.

At the same time don't overwhelm them. Give them breaks throughout the day and give them time to process. Give them time to sit and read through some things they need to read through or just to take a walk around the block.

It's a lot to take in in the beginning.

Think out loud about everything. This is a good strategy even months into the new position.

Research says that it takes people about a year to really get comfortable in a new job.

As you're training and guiding them, think things through out loud so you can explain to them what is going on, and give them time.

You don't want them sitting twiddling their thumbs because that doesn't feel good either, but you don't want to jam pack eight hours on the first day where they don't even have a minute to have lunch or take a break or take it all in.

Organizations with a structured orientation program have 50% higher staff retention, so come up with an intentional orientation plan and just like your hiring process, ask your staff who's been through it.

What worked, what didn't, what can be improved?

Be clear about expectations early and often- what their goals are going to be, what the evaluation process looks like.

Show them all the forms they need to know from the very beginning, so it's clear to them what is expected of them.

How to communicate with you. If it's okay to text or call or email between what hours.

What constitutes an emergency.

Be clear and articulate everything.

Don't assume.

Who they can contact about what. This can be really challenging particularly in organizations that don't have an HR department.

Where one person does payroll and one person does time off and one person does Metro reimbursement or whatever your systems are.

Have something prepared so they know who to turn to when they have questions.

Coach them to ask questions, make observations, and where they can find answers.

One time I trained someone they never wrote anything down. And they didn't remember anything because they weren't writing anything down. They never had any questions and I could tell early on it wasn't going to work out because there's so much information to take in and you as the supervisor or the supervisor of the supervisor.

It's not your role to give them all the information all the time. Yes, you want to inform them of what they need to know, but while you're doing that you also want to create a culture where they are empowered and encouraged to ask questions along the way. To share their observations with you and to try to come up with answers and figure it out as you give them that support as well.

Try a 30-day challenge where you check in every single day for the first 30 days and give some type of feedback.

This doesn't need to be an hour of you sitting down in your office with this new staff. It can be as little as an email or a text or a two-minute conversation of 'hey, this thing went really well today' or 'thank you for doing that' or 'actually we do it this way'.

Set up the expectation that you're going to be seeking feedback from them, too.

*How did your first day go?*

*What would have made it better?*

*How can we make tomorrow better?*

*What went right?*

So it's this two-way street and you let them know this is how things work here.

Feedback feedback.

Coaching coaching.

Provide a mentor. This is valuable for so many reasons. It supports them. It gives someone on your team an opportunity to be a mentor and it takes something off your very full plate.

Highlight the importance of self-care- physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, in all the ways. Articulate it verbally, but also model it.

Take breaks, take lunch, encourage them to take their vacation time.

When they don't, let them know that this work can be really challenging and in addition to taking time off for themselves provide them space to process through the many things they will need to process through to do this job well and to do it in a way that protects their mental health and wellness.

So, something for you to think about is how can you more effectively set your new staff up for success?