

Returning to Work After COVID-19: Planning for Success



Many of us have been working remotely for several weeks now and the time to return to the workplace is on the horizon. This may be a relief or it may be far harder than you expected. The following tips will help ease your transition, whether you are excited, a bit anxious **or BOTH!**

1. **ESTABLISH a SENSE of CONTROL:** DO what you CAN to help protect yourself and others from getting sick. This will help ease anxiety. Many of us are suffering from “pandemic fatigue”. We’re tired of hearing and doing these things, however, now is not the time to push them aside! Taking these steps will help you feel more in control, while also helping to prevent the spread of infection.
 - Wash your hands regularly, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water.
 - Clean all high-touch areas every hour.
 - Wear a face mask to feel more comfortable.
 - Stay six feet away from others when possible.
 - Stay home if you are sick and stay away from others experiencing symptoms.
2. **USE YOUR RESOURCES:** Your employer provides a wonderful resource to help you cope with the changes and emotions. A **Best Care EAP counselor** can help you manage any anxiety or worries you may have about returning to work. **All sessions with a BCEAP counselor are FREE and CONFIDENTIAL.**
3. **EMBRACE THE RETURN TO STRUCTURE:** Lack of a routine can be a driving force for anxiety or other mental health issues. If you can, try to get into your work routine at home before physically returning –wake up at the normal time, shower and get dressed as you normally would, and try to return to your normal timeline during the day.
4. **BE CONSIDERATE OF YOUR COWORKERS:** Give each other more space than you would have previously. Traditional ways of connecting (handshakes, sharing food, etc.) may not be appropriate. Develop and implement new ways of connecting and celebrating.
5. **BE RESPECTFUL:** People will return to work with different levels of fear and anxiety. Respect differences in comfort levels and practice kindness. Give each other grace. Fear and tension may be running high, especially in the first few weeks of returning to work.
6. **BE POSITIVE AND GRATEFUL:** All of us are dealing with lots of unknowns right now - even our leaders. All they can do is make the best decisions they can with the information they have. And we all know how quickly information changes from day to day. Instead of finding fault, show support, be positive and bring out the positive even in stressful situations. Being grateful will help you be positive.
7. **PRACTICE SELF CARE:** Get good sleep (uninterrupted), eat healthy and exercise—now more than ever. Good self-care will reduce stress and build your immune system.

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you or a loved one are experiencing anxiety related to returning to the workplace, Best Care EAP counselors are available to help. **Call (402) 354-8000 or (800) 801-4182 to speak with a counselor or to set up an appointment.**