

Tips for a smooth return to the workplace or hybrid work



After being home for a long period of time due to the pandemic, many people are starting to return to their workplaces. While some people are celebrating the return, others are not. The reality is, whatever your situation, going back will be an adjustment for you and your coworkers.

Here are some things to consider to help make it an easier transition for everyone.

Be compassionate. Everyone reacts to change differently. Know that coworkers will have differing reactions and emotions. Some will feel eager to reconnect. Many will experience a mix of emotions.

Also, for some people, returning to work will bring up emotions such as stress and anxiety. At work, they may become easily irritated, fatigued or have trouble focusing. In some cases, they may even experience depression, fatigue or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Moving to a new routine can be uncomfortable for many. If you become aware of a coworker who is struggling, you may want to discretely check in with them. Depending on your role, encourage

them to connect with their manager or to seek help. An employee assistance program is a great place to start.

Know what to expect. Learn about any COVID-19 safety precaution policies your organization may have implemented. This way, you'll understand the preventive measures being taken, and those you're expected to take. For example, talk to your manager about how shared spaces should be used, if people can continue to join meetings virtually, etc. The more you know what to expect, the better prepared you'll be.

Respect one another's choices. Some people adapt and feel more comfortable than others, even in times without a pandemic.

Different organizations may have different rules, and these may change over time. So, as long as your coworkers are within these guidelines, respect their choices as their own. If they are not following them, consider politely and discretely addressing it with your coworker, or talking to a manager about it.

Also, if it makes you feel more comfortable to err on the side of caution despite what the guidelines are, continue wearing a mask, washing your hands frequently and practicing social distancing, even if others are not.

Use common sense. Whether or not it's COVID-19, if you're sick, stay home – and be supportive if and when coworkers choose to stay home sick. Add video or phone options to meetings, so coworkers can choose to dial in from home if they don't feel well. This will help stop the potential spread of illnesses and promote health and wellness for all of you.

Ease your mind. Take time to do things that make you feel calm, relaxed, or happy. Likewise, identify what you don't have control over and do your best to accept it. Think about all the things you can control, too. If you're experiencing anxiety, reach out for help. Talk to your doctor, or contact your company's employee assistance program to learn about healthcare, childcare and other resources that are available to you.

Find your routine. As you ease into creating a new routine, it's important to establish some healthy practices such as maintaining a regular sleep schedule, preparing a healthy meal to take to work, and scheduling small breaks throughout your day. If you are not comfortable in some situations that used to be part of your regular work life, don't force yourself. And if you need additional support, services such as an employee assistance program can help connect you with tailored support to fit your needs.



**If you need a little more support,
reach out to your Employee
Assistance Program.**

SOURCES:

Repurposed from:
<https://www.liveandworkwell.com/content/en/member/article.16169.html> Accessed 3.30.22

Optum brochure: WF4045877_208281-032021_Vaccines-ReturntoWork_EN_US

Additional source referenced:

National Library of Medicine, "Six Key Advantages and Disadvantages of Working from Home in Europe during COVID-19."
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7917590/> Accessed 3.30.22

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