

ALLONE HEALTH FAMILY OF EAPS

STRATEGIES & TIPS FOR RETURN TO WORK



Our post-pandemic return to work evokes all kinds of concerns and curiosities – administrative, operational, and human resource-related. At the epicenter, is the question of our well-being and that of our workplace community. There's obviously the physical health part of that, but there's also the psychological part, how we treat ourselves and others. That's the people side of things. How do we summon the best in ourselves in the face of so many unknowns?. The following are some strategies to assist with our reintegration back into the workplace.

EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

No one knows what things will be like when we get back – because we've never been here before. There's no playbook. Indeed, emotions are likely to be extremely varied, from dreading the return to "I can't wait to get back." While we need a reintegration plan, understand that there will be hiccups and bumps along the way and that, while there may be a plan in place, there'll also be deviations from the plan. Knowing this ahead of the game can help avoid frustration and disappointment.

LISTEN FIRST

Listening is one of those things we know we should do, but don't always do so well. We're busy and it can be hard to focus our attention on one thing. But, with everything we've all been through emotionally, people are going to want to share, tell their stories. The more present we can be in those conversations, the better. Tips for listening: don't say anything at first, just be 'all ears.' Then ask follow-up questions to signify interest. And, don't turn it back to you right away. Look to have dialogs, not monologs.

FOSTER EMPATHY & TOLERANCE

Empathy is always an important because it helps us understand how others are feeling so we can then respond appropriately to the situation. When we return to the workplace, employees are going to feel emotionally raw and will need a sensitive ear to help them reacclimate and get back on their feet. Working together, being attuned to each other's needs – this will help us rebuild morale, productivity and trust.

LEAD THROUGH COMMUNICATION & TRANSPARENCY

Of course, leaders will play an integral role in the reacclimation back into the workplace. Managers and supervisors should look for ways to share information about COVID developments with employees, keeping them abreast of changes in the office. Leaders can let employees know that they'll be looking to disseminate information when they hear it, to help mitigate against the collective uncertainty. Sharing information, as best possible, reflects transparency and helps build trust.

MINDFULNESS APPS

to help ease our reintegration: Mindfulness Daily; Calm; Headspace; Buddhify; Breethe

OTHER RESOURCES

AllOne Employee Assistance Program: 1-800-451-1834

Center for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration: <https://www.osha.gov/>