

BACK TO THE WORKPLACE AFTER COVID-19



As governments ease restrictions on stay-at-home orders, we're entering a new phase of the pandemic: Employees returning to the workplace.

Managers, are you ready to lead the way?

Moving forward, it's important to acknowledge your employees needs and struggles. Many are still coping with pandemic-related stresses and traumas.

To guide your employees from crisis mode to recovery, the following tips can help:

1. **Ensure a safe work environment.** Safeguarding your employees' health is paramount. Consider new cleaning protocols, physical distancing guidelines and using personal protective equipment. Educate your employees on [COVID-19 symptoms](#), and advise them to stay home if they're symptomatic. You may want to screen employees, visitors and vendors for fever before they enter the workplace and establish rules for when employees can return after an infection. If possible, use staggered work schedules or long-term remote work to reduce the number of people at the workplace.
2. **Communicate with your employees.** Hold virtual meetings with groups or individuals to share your organization's new policies and practices for returning to the workplace. Address your employees' questions and concerns as this helps build a sense of trust and security. At times like these, a collaborative approach can be most effective for moving forward.
3. **Be empathetic.** Many employees have faced overwhelming challenges and hardships due to the pandemic: The loss of a loved one. A spouse's lost job. Competing work-life challenges with closed schools and daycare centers. Keeping vulnerable family members safe. Listen to your employees with interest and compassion. To help them process the events of the last several months, ask them to share their stories about working remotely.
4. **Encourage employees to use their Employee Assistance Program.** Our EAP Services Center is open 24/7 and can refer employees to counseling for emotional stress, managing changing relationships and recovering from recent traumas.
5. **Contact your EAP account manager for additional assistance and resources.** Just as EAPs are a valuable resource for employees, EAP account managers are an excellent resource for organizations and managers. When employees and managers receive the support they need, organizations themselves become stronger and more resilient.