Returning to Work After COVID-19

Returning to work after weeks of the COVID-19 shutdown can cause differing amounts of emotions – disbelief, fear and even anger – among workers, much like after a disaster. But, employers and co-workers alike can watch for signs of emotional impact over the coming weeks and months, to ensure everyone is finding their way back to a new normal. When states, cities and workplaces begin reopening, COVID-19 won't be gone, nor will the concerns that surround it.

Returning to work Minimizing employees' potential exposure to COVID-19 must be a top priority. Reopening businesses will come with challenges and people will respond differently to being back at work. Some may have anxiety about returning to work safely; or about finding safe daycare for their children, who are not returning to school. Others will be tired of being at home and will welcome the opportunity to go about life as if nothing is happening. Each of our lives have been altered and directly impacted by this crisis. Returning to work after a pandemic is new territory for all of us, and we must have patience with ourselves and others while we navigate the process.

Emotional stress and well-being Employers and co-workers should watch for signs of emotional impact over the coming weeks and months. *Signs someone may be struggling in their return to the workplace include changes in performance and productivity, such as missing deadlines, calling in sick frequently, absenteeism, irritability and anger, difficulty concentrating and making decisions, withdrawal from work activity, and difficulty with work transitions or changes in routines.*

Do's and don'ts when returning to work:
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Follow the policies and procedures of your employer for cleaning and disinfecting.
- Clean and disenfect frequently touched objects and surfaces in your work area, including keyboards, phones, handrails and doorknobs.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Inform your supervisor if you have a sick family member at home with COVID-19.
- Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Be patient. You may experience a variety of emotions after returning to work, this is normal.
- Continue to take care of your self. Eat well, and get plenty of rest and exercise.
- Seek help if you need to. Experiencing a major event like a pandemic—has made everyone a little on edge, fearful and shaky.

Best Care EAP is here for you. Don't hesitate to pick up the phone and call to speak to one of our licensed counselors. The hotline (800) 801-4182 is FREE and available 24/7. Sessions can be held via telehealth and are completely confidential.