

Managing Return To Work Anxiety

Life has changed quickly during the COVID-19 pandemic. For many families, that's meant finding a new "normal" in their work and school routines. And as schools and workplaces reopen, that means more change — and with it, more anxiety.

If you are feeling uneasy or anxious about a return-to-work date, know that you're not alone. Here are a few things to consider to help you navigate this tumultuous time:

1. Be graceful with yourself and others

This is a new and unique situation that everyone is going through in some form or fashion together. Despite our best efforts, mistakes will be made. Give yourself space to be patient and understanding with yourself and others as we all work to find our way to "the new".

2. Be prepared

Understanding yourself, your needs, and your "signals" will help you to be attuned to how you are reacting to the changes that you are going through. Get ahead of things to the extent possible. The situation will, no doubt, continue to evolve but you can find some comfort in being in control of what you can influence.

3. Talk to your coworkers and employer

You're not going through this by yourself and the questions you have are shared by others. Find ways to engage others in dialogue about the realities of the situation, what is known, what is not, and the path forward. If you're comfortable in being vulnerable, find ways to productively share your emotions and fears associated with the future. Let people know what you need so they can help.

4. Breathe

When the anxiety of the unknown begins to swell, sometimes the best first step is simply to stop for a beat and breathe. There are plenty of fantastic resources out there to help guide you in learning how to take a pause, breathe, and recenter yourself.

5. Get help

If you are finding that the anxiety associated with these changes is becoming too much to manage you need to be honest with yourself and acknowledge that it may be time to reach out to someone who can assist.

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