

## COPING WITH COVID-19

### HOW TO HANDLE ANXIETY-GOING BACK TO THE OFFICE

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#### *What to do when going back to work.*

Due to COVID-19, workers in the United States have been asked to quarantine themselves. This will hopefully flatten the curve of transmitting the virus by staying at home and working from home. COVID-19 is a virus that doctors are still trying to figure out. Persons can be carriers and not show symptoms. Due to the virus being highly contagious and causing severe illness, it may cause anxiety; particularly in vulnerable populations. This information will provide tools on how to handle anxiety when going back to work.

#### **WHAT IS ANXIETY?**

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease, typically about an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome. Anxiety can come from a variety of sources.



Going back to work may create anxiety since it is hard to know what to expect. Even experts aren't sure how to best contain the threat of illness. While people are monitoring infection trends and working on vaccines, this is a new threat. So, the outcome is uncertain.

#### **DEALING WITH ANXIETY TRIGGERS BEFORE RETURNING TO THE WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Make sure you are informed on policies and procedures for COVID-19. Stay at home if you feel sick. When going back to work during COVID-19, create boundaries and let others know how you would like for them to respect your boundaries. Think of professional ways to let others know that



you are uncomfortable. Speak to a supervisor if someone is not following safe practices or respecting your needs.

## STAYING SAFE AT WORK

- Use social distancing, depending on the type of work, by using telecommunication instead of face to face meetings. Use larger meeting rooms to create an environment where there is enough room to spread apart.
- Use face masks where appropriate.
- Cover your mouth with a tissue and then throw it away if you sneeze or cough.
- Wash your hands with warm water and soap. Rub your hands together for 20 seconds (Happy Birthday twice) before rinsing. Use a paper towel to turn off the water and open the door before throwing it away.



- Keep cleaning supplies around to disinfect your work area frequently.
- Be open and honest with your supervisors about concerns about COVID-19 anxieties.

## WAYS TO REDUCE ANXIETY WHILE AT WORK

- Get away from your computer.
- Try gentle stretching.
- Communicate with the people around you from a distance.
- Drink plenty of water.
- Go outside for a few minutes.
- Check in with your breathing; take deep breaths and then slowly release.
- Create a list of things that make you happy.
- Take a five-minute meditation break.

## References and Resources

Anxiety and Depression Association of America  
<https://adaa.org/about-adaa/press-room/facts-statistics>

Managing Anxiety  
<https://psychcentral.com/blog/8-surprisingly-simple-ways-to-manage-anxiety-at-work/>

Psychcentral  
<https://psychcentral.com/>

For General Health Information: [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)  
TN COVID-19 Information: <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>  
TN Mental Health Hotline: 1-855-274-7471  
TN Addiction and Recovery Hotline: 1-800-889-9789

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