

# HANDLING STRESS

Daily routines can ease stress and boost overall wellness. Consider:

- Connecting with others. It's good for our brains and our spirits.
- Fitting in regular exercise.
- Eating a balanced diet.
- Limiting TV time and social media exposure.
- Sticking to the facts about COVID.
- Protecting yourself and loved ones. That can include vaccinations, wearing masks, and social distancing.
- Relaxing. Consider hobbies and activities you enjoy.
- Practicing mindfulness. Meditation or yoga can help ease anxiety, depression, high blood pressure, and other issues.
- Avoiding substance use. If you drink, practice moderation.
- If you have a mental or physical health condition, be sure to keep getting treatment.



NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS HELPLINE 800-950-NAMI (6264)
NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE 800-273-TALK (8255)
CRISIS TEXT LINE TEXT: 741741
SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE ADMINISTRATION HELPLINE 800-662-HELP (4357)

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# RETURNING TO NORMAL MENTAL HEALTH, POST-COVID-19



## YOU'VE RECEIVED THE CALL. EVERYONE MUST RETURN TO THE WORKPLACE ON A CERTAIN DATE

A lot of fears and questions may be racing through your mind, including:

- Is it safe?
- Will I get sick? Could I get others sick?
- I'll have to fight traffic.
- I'll have to wear something other than sweatpants.
- I've been home so long I'm not sure I can face the office.
- I'll be around people. Loads and loads of people.



Feeling anxious during a global pandemic is normal. COVID-19 has affected nearly everyone's lives. We've been urged to stay home as much as possible, to wear face masks, and to limit in-person contact for many months.

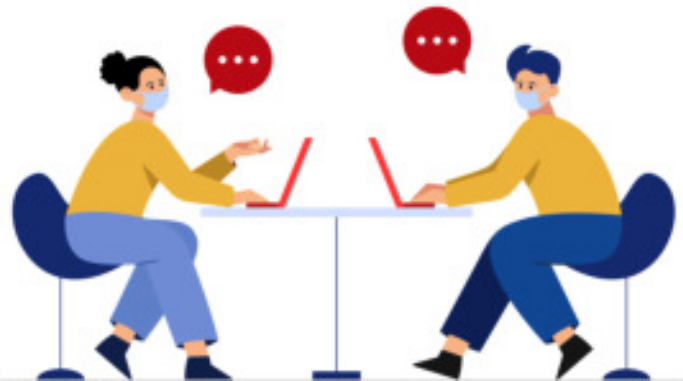
## WHY ARE WE STRESSED?

The reasons we're stressed vary.

Psychologist Susan Albers, PsyD, talked to the Cleveland Clinic about stress. She says its source is twofold:

1. **Safety.** People fear leaving their homes. They're afraid they'll get COVID-19. They're also afraid they might spread it.
2. **Social.** For the last year we've been distancing from other people and we're out of practice.

Stress is something no one is immune to. We feel it about finances, work, in relationships, and even during day-to-day experiences.



## SIGNS OF STRESS

Knowing the signs of stress can be helpful in handling it. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says common symptoms include:

- Nervousness, anxiety
- Apathy, indifference
- Annoyance, irritation
- Sadness, depression
- Sleep troubles
- Concentration difficulties
- Headaches, stomach troubles, skin rashes, and pain

Changes in appetite, personality, and appearance, and/or a lack of interest or difficulty in getting day-to-day things accomplished are also signs that stress is starting to take a toll.

## CALMING RETURN-TO-WORK JITTERS

We can't avoid stress, but we can anticipate it and prepare for it.

If you're nervous about returning to work, consider:

- **Going on a trial run.** Go back to the office before your official return date. Reacquaint yourself a bit.
- **Tidying up.** If you haven't been back in a while, you might want to wipe down surfaces and rearrange things. Bring in a plant or some pictures so the place feels like yours again.
- **Giving yourself a mini makeover.** If it's been months or more since your last haircut, that might make you feel more ready.
- **Establishing a more regular sleep schedule.** Just like when summer vacation came to an end when you were a kid, it helps to set a routine.
- **Embracing new work-life barriers.** If working from home kept you on tasks long past five (or whenever your work day typically ended), returning to the office might be welcome.

