

WELLNESS WEBINAR

Grab your Keys, your Wallet & your Mask...we're going back!

I don't know about you but I'm all for being told what I should be doing to manage my life in a world of COVID but it sure would be cool if someone also filled me in on the secrets of how to do these things...what mechanisms I could put into place to support these new rules and structures I'm meant to be following. That was the aim of this wellness webinar – to share with you all the suggestions for living the good life in the era of COVID but also the strategies and tactics to implement, maintain and not lose our ever-loving minds in the process. I think these conversations are especially important right now as kids are going back to school and parents are navigating these latest uncharted waters. Then there's the office spaces that are opening up and the uncertainty of what all that will look like, even as we logically recognize it won't be the same but not internalizing what it might actually look like. Here are some additional tips, strategies and resources for you to keep your sanity as we go back.

7 Tips for Returning to School

1. It will be important to listen to students' concerns and, even if the emotions are extreme, **express understanding and empathy**. Letting families know you understand and appreciate their perspective will help open up a dialogue for problem solving.
2. Instead, being open, honest, and encouraging with students is a preferred approach. This may include acknowledging risks while emphasizing how precautions reduce those risks and how students can feel good about coming back to school given all of the thought and planning that has gone into protecting students.
3. No amount of planning will prevent students from being anxious. Therefore, encouraging tolerance of fear and anxiety, rather than avoidance, will be essential. Fear naturally encourages a desire to run away, but this avoidance maintains anxiety in the long-run. In contrast, facing feared situations promotes resilience and reduces anxiety in the long-run by helping youth realize they are capable of coping.
4. As students are returning to schools, praise them for showing courage in the face of fear and let them know that being brave and courageous will help them (and you and your fellow staff) get through this together.
5. Letting students know your experiences with anxiety and uncertainty, as well as your coping strategies, can make them feel less alone and can provide them with a guide for how to handle the situation themselves.
6. Our capacity to support others is limited by our own physical and mental well-being. Remember that being a teacher or school-based professional is tough and you may be struggling to keep yourself healthy throughout all of this. Ensure you are showing yourself compassion as well as others – you may need an extra break or two in your day to regroup given all these changes.
7. While tolerating uncertainty will be required for families to some extent, communicate frequently and clearly about what is planned for returning to school can ease the transition. Even if plans change, regular communication will support their own planning and coping.

(Source: Anxiety Canada; <https://www.anxietycanada.com/articles/7-tips-for-educators-returning-to-school-during-covid-19/>)

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7 Tips for Returning to the Office

1. One of the hardest things to realize is that it's not going to be the same as when you left – same as going to the grocery store has fundamentally the same activities, the process and experience looks different so be prepared for that.
2. This reentry and recovery phase of the pandemic crisis provides leaders with a compelling reason to engage and strengthen overall connections with employees. Recognizing and addressing the core human emotions of grief, loss, and anxiety in the workplace is a chance to rebuild organizational health, productivity, and talent retention. It provides a historic opportunity to overcome the stigma of mental and emotional health as taboo topics for workplace discussion, especially the feelings of isolation and shame that are attached to job losses and other employment casualties.
3. Clear and inspiring communication is central to making this next unsteady phase a success. In addition to moving decisively on strategic changes, leaders need to help rattled workforces believe in the future. For many people, their employer has been a zone of relative stability during a time of chronic uncertainty.
4. Seems silly but if you can get into the habit of always grabbing your mask at the same time as you grab your wallet & your keys, you'll stack those habits and will be more likely to remember to bring your mask with you without having to use a whole bunch of extra brain power.
5. Ask your manager what to expect upon your return. Think of practical barriers such as computer passwords that might have expired, or door or parking codes that are no longer valid. If your area has asked you to maintain physical distancing at your workplace, will your physical space or schedule change to reflect this? If there is a building or office manager, they might have an update for you before the return to the office.
6. Remember that, just as it was an adjustment for you not to go to the workplace, it might be an adjustment to return to the workplace. You might be operating under new management, with new health and safety guidelines in place. Remember that it's OK if you're slow to start at your job, as long as you're doing so safely. Be mindful about those around you who might also be struggling. Before long, you'll all settle into a routine that will feel natural.
7. Going back to the workplace might mean that the routine and systems that you and your family have become used to during the pandemic may shift. If you're expected to return to the workplace, but have children whose schools are still closed, who will watch them? If you are caregiving for an older relative, who will look after them? If someone is at high-risk for COVID-19, do you have a routine for coming home at the end of the day that minimizes their exposure, such as washing your hands immediately? Having these conversations ahead of time will help make sure that expectations for you, your partner, and your family are clear.

(Source: McKinsey; <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/communications-get-personal-how-leaders-can-engage-employees-during-a-return-to-work#>; Source: Morneau Shepell; <https://www.morneaushepell.com/ca-en/preparing-go-back-workplace-again-after-self-isolation-lifts>)

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Become a self-awareness superhero

You can't control how your brain works but you can understand it – and use that intel to change the way you relate to others and show up in the world. [Emergenetics](#) is a neuroscience-based psychoanalytic tool that identifies how you think – how your brain processes information, and how you show up in the world. This tool will teach you about your unique characteristics and how your awesome qualities are so valuable to your workplace, your family, and your community. You'll learn that everyone thinks differently than you do – that we all approach the world in different ways – and you'll learn how to use your remarkable strengths to work together and contribute to your environment in influential and significant ways.

Although the self-assessment activity during the workshop was great, we're not always the best at self-identifying our preferences vs our abilities. For a true scientific analysis of how you think and behave, [complete your personalized Emergenetics profile](#) at a special discounted price of \$150! **Only available until September 11th so act fast!**

Books to deepen the learning

I often say my biography should read: "She was born. She learned to read. She did things with what she learned. Someday she'll die." 😊 I've always been a big reader and in times of uncertainty, books (and Google) are definitely the first place I turn to as a way to manage. A few books that have really helped me navigate this season in my life are below – worth checking out if you're also a reading enthusiast.

- ☑ [Resilience by Eric Greitens](#)
- ☑ [Good Habits, Bad Habits by Wendy Wood](#)
- ☑ [Atomic Habits by James Clear](#)
- ☑ [Work that Works – Emergenetics in the Workplace by Dr. Geil Browning](#)
- ☑ [Making Hope Happen by Shane Lopez](#)

I intend to...

Stating our intentions is the best way to ensure we actually follow through on an action. To increase your probability of taking an action, complete the following sentence:

I intend to **(action)** so **(reason for taking action)**.