

# EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## ADAPTING TO THE HYBRID WORK ENVIRONMENT

The COVID-19 pandemic presents numerous challenges and new situations that needed to be navigated — especially as it relates to the work environment. If your department moved to remote work during the height of the pandemic, and is now shifting to a hybrid work environment, your team may need help adjusting to this change. Looking for additional support? Consider these tips to help your team adapt to a new working environment:

### **Understand your team's needs, desires and concerns.**

If your organization has instituted new policies, procedures, or mandates, clearly communicate this information with your team. Understanding their needs, addressing their questions, and practicing open communication helps keep employees engaged, informed, and focused on their job responsibilities.

### **Set realistic expectations and commit to flexibility.**

Workers who have been working remotely for a long time may experience different issues related to coming into the workplace. Some people may have to make major adjustments while other might have anxiety about the return. Think about setting realistic expectations and being understanding while remaining flexible to accommodate individual needs. It will take time to manage schedules and understand policies to ensure that employees are comfortable with the new work environment.

**Find creative ways to keep all workers engaged – in the workplace and at home.** Physical distance can lead to psychological distance. It is much easier to check in on colleagues when sharing a physical space and without visible cues for how busy someone is, you may hesitate to reach out to them. One solution is to “open a virtual office door” by posting a message like “open for chats.” Activities that can be done together, such as exercise or meditation, can be a great way to increase communication and collaboration.

### **Launch reorientations and reintroductions for all.**

Consider all employees to be new employees and launch a re-orientation to the new workplace and re-introduction to the team. The workplace is not the same and neither are the people returning to it. People may be meeting colleagues in person for the first time, or the first time in a while, and re-establishing what the norms are for in-person and virtual communication. Another option is to implement a buddy system, pairing new starters with a more experienced employee. This person becomes the go-to for the day-to-day informal questions and company information, which helps ensure that remote employees don't miss out on the informal learning those in the office benefit from.



**Remind employees of the services available through EAP.**

What can EAP help with?	What services are available?
Emotional health issues such as anxiety, stress, depression, grief, etc.	<b>Counseling:</b> Counseling is available to employees and their eligible dependents in-person, by text message, live chat, phone, or video conference.
Work-life flow including finding childcare providers, caregivers for pets, home care services, grocery, and meal delivery, and more.	<b>Work-Life Services:</b> Webinars, live talks, and articles that offer insights and strategies focused on key life events and day-to-day challenges.
Discounts on items such as electronics and cars, major appliances to equip a home office, and more.	<b>Discount center:</b> Hundreds of deals on nationally recognized, brand-name products and services.
Guidance with financial issues, budgeting, and planning for the future.	<b>Financial wellness:</b> Meet with a Money Coach for 30 minutes up to three times per topic, per year.
Learn how to control anxiety, reduce stress, balance emotions, and much more	<b>Digital emotional well-being program:</b> Interactive, self-paced programs on dozens of life topics.

**EAP is completely confidential and here to help you and your household members 24/7/365. No situation is too big or too small. Give us a call or visit the EAP website to get started.**

**Sources:**

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