Establishing a New Normal in the Workplace After a Pandemic

Bowie State University Office of Human Resources
Mental Health Week
Dr. D. Fredrica Brooks-Davis, Presenter
July 21, 2021
10:00 a.m.
Objective

• Learn strategies to help you reset and thrive as you transition back to working in your office in the aftermath of the pandemic.
5-MINUTE MEDITATION
Prior to COVID-19, what two words did you use to describe your experience working on campus?
• List two concerns you had or still have about returning to your office on campus.
Before the pandemic...

• What was your daily routine before arriving to your office?
Throughout the pandemic...

• What has been your daily routine before beginning the workday?
Now that you are back to work, what’s next?
Check - in

- Acknowledge your feelings to include any fears or concerns you have about returning to work and/or the current state of the pandemic.
Create a safe space: Supervisors

**Consider**
Consider implementing an open-door policy allowing the staff to share their experiences before COVID-19, during COVID-19, and today.

**Explore**
Explore what, if any, impact their experiences and concerns may have on performance and together develop a plan for progress.

**Secure**
Secure a referral list of professional counselors to share with your employees.

**Confirm**
Confirm the resources available for your employees from Human Resources.
Create a safe space: Employees

Consider speaking with your supervisor about your experiences before COVID-19, during COVID-19, and today.

Explore what, if any, impact your experiences may have on your performance and discuss this with your supervisor.

Be open to embracing help from mental health professionals.

Contact Human Resources Department to inquire about available resources.
Manage Expectations

Assignments  Deadlines  Offer flexibility when appropriate  Create virtual, outdoor, and indoor meeting opportunities  Prepare for a “shut-down”
Review and Share Safety Protocols
Three Keys to Stress Management

• The Situation
  • It is not always possible for us to change the situation; however, there are times when it is possible.

• The Thought
  • Shifting our attitude and perspective can open doors to alternative solutions and reduce stress.

• The Response
  • How we choose to respond can either lead us toward growth/resolution or further distress.
Protective Steps for the Body

- Stay Active
- Maintain appropriate sleep patterns
- Keep a balanced diet
Protective Steps for the Mind

• Stay connected

• Be proactive

• Progress-oriented positive self-talk

• Take time for self-care
The Impact on Parents (Janssen et al., 2020)

- Increased negative affect
- Stress
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Depressive symptoms
- Anxiety
- Change in parenting behaviors
  - Parent(s) could become more emotionally withdrawn, critical, or irritated rather than being sensitive, supportive, and encouraging

As a result, being confined could lead to increased tension, family conflicts, irritability, domestic violence, or child abuse.
Questions & Answers