








EMPLOYEE SERIES

Tips for successful return to your life following the potential lifting of COVID-19 restrictions

Over the past few months we've all had to adapt to a completely new way of life in order to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe. We are now in the fortunate position of having the restrictions lifted which can lead us to have a number of different reactions. We may experience a range of different emotions such as excitement, hesitancy and worry about the opportunity to get out of the house and back into the community. It's important to take some time to reflect on how you're personally feeling about this, and then make a plan to help you manage the upcoming changes.





The important part of this plan is thinking about what strategies you can put in place to ease your way back in to a post COVID-19 world. Here are a few things to note when thinking about this:

-  **Everyone is different.** Whilst you may feel excited to see your loved ones again they may feel different. Ensure you check in with your family and friends before popping over. Adjusting to increased socialisation may take time for those who are particularly nervous about not having a vaccine for COVID-19 yet. If you are nervous or reluctant, consider communicating to your friends and family about your preferences for receiving or going on visits.
-  **Take it slow.** You may feel excited to finally be able to catch up with your friends or to be able to eat your favorite meal in your local restaurant. However, going out most nights can quickly become exhausting and eating out often can be expensive. Try limiting your visits and meals out to allow yourself to warm up to this change and ease back into your usual routine.
-  **Make the most of the time you have with your people.** What an opportunity to share and reconnect with your partner and children. Create a structure and routine to your days. Focus on five skills you want your family to master by the end of isolation – for example, making pancakes, learning poker, knitting, touch-typing or learning to jive – dedicate some time each day building skills that you have never had time to develop previously!
-  **Keep the parts you liked.** If you've loved your new routine take note of what you really enjoyed about it, and think about how you can keep this in place (e.g. getting out for a walk during the day, working from home where possible or spending quality time with the kids). You've more than likely learned lots of positives, so make the most of these.
-  **Write it down.** We have had multiple small, and many large, changes requested of us in a very short period of time. Changing again to a post COVID-19 routine can be confusing,

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particularly if you are a carer, parent or are partnered. You may find it helpful to write down the new routine for everyone in your household in as much detail as you need. Expect that the household will need to refer to it to remind themselves of what is required as well as what is now allowed and what is still not OK to do.

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Be kind to yourself and others. Transitioning from one way of 'being' to another is quick and exciting for some but for others it may take time. It is OK to find the 'new normal' strange and somewhat uncomfortable. Be kind to yourself and to others by offering reassurance that this is a process of adapting. You have adapted before and are likely to do so again. Check in with your loved ones about how they are traveling with this change and speak to those you trust about your experience. We are all in this together.
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Remember to be cautious. Although the recent statistics of active cases in Western Australia remains low, we cannot become complacent of the social distance requirements and hygiene standards to continue to keep us all safe. Remember to continue to practice these safety behaviours when going out to meet with friends and family or being out in the community.
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Talk about your feelings. As mentioned, we are all unique individuals that perceive situations all very differently. For some people lessening the restrictions on gatherings and social distancing may lead to excitement while for others, a sense of anxiety. Be open about your feelings to your loved ones so that they can help support you during this time. There is no right or wrong way to feel about this as it a situation that none of us have faced before.
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Speak to a professional. If you're feeling anxious about re-entering social spaces, try and keep the good things in place to look after your own health, but also trust that the experts are keeping you safe at a Government level and seek help if you are still feeling worried. Talk to trusted friends and make use of professional support if needed (e.g. EAP or your Doctor)

There's no doubt COVID-19 has caused us all to re-evaluate and restructure a number of things in our lives, so go easy on yourself during this time and there is always support available for you from your EAP by simply calling:

Australia: 1300 66 77 00 | New Zealand: 0800 327 669

What is the main benefit of using your EAP?

Throughout this time, we really encourage you to make the most of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). It's an independent, professional support service. It is free, completely confidential and available 24/7. Most EAP clients generally agree, having a counsellor who listens and provides strategic advice and support helps them cope and manage a wide range of problematic issues much better than if they struggled with personal, workplace or family issues by themselves.

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