



## COVID-19

# Return to Work: Tips for Managers

As businesses open up during the COVID-19 pandemic, this “new normal” requires extensive changes and adaptations at every level. Managers will need to know how to implement, enforce and adjust their organization’s safety and health directives for work-at-home, sick leave and other policies. It’s equally important to know how to provide emotional support to employees facing their own challenges and uncertainties to maximize productivity. **Here are key points to consider.**

**Recognize employees may experience a variety of emotions regarding returning to work.** This can include fear, anxiety, gratitude, and excitement.

**Communicate often to build trust.** Use email, conversations, staff and one-on-one meetings to reinforce and update specific messages on how your company is approaching safety and health precautions. Make your communications positive, concise, and focused on the present, demonstrating a problem-solving approach.

**Solicit feedback regarding the frequency, type, and length of your communications.** A constant bombardment or long-winded reminders can prompt employees to overlook vital information.

**Check in with your team members as to how they and their family are doing.** Do this periodically as family health and other situations can change.

**Respond to emotional reactions.** Listen and watch for signs of emotional distress, which may include changes in work behavior.

**Get input from your employees about what is working and what is not.** Determine if a concerning issue is an individual or more broadly shared issue. Consider soliciting solutions to help resolve the issue.

**Be flexible.** Adjust expectations while still holding employees accountable for the things that matter most. For example, some workloads and responsibilities may need to be shifted for those caring for a sick family member.

**Make sure you are following your own self-care plan.** Stick to the preventive health and safety measures, get proper sleep, take lunch breaks, and find activities that help you restore your energy and a sense of balance. If you are feeling overwhelmed, seek help.

Refer employees to their Health Advocate EAP program for confidential help with grief, stress, managing change, conflicts, family challenges, and other personal, family and work/life issues.



**HealthAdvocate**<sup>SM</sup>