

Return to Work Plan for COVID19

1 Introduction

The purpose of this document is to describe the nature of arrangements for staff returning to work after COVID19. Throughout the last six months, we have experienced significant events, which have brought unplanned changes in many areas of life. Many people have experienced the quick transition to work from home. This experience of working from home to assist the community ‘flatten the curve’, has presented opportunities and challenges for all. These experiences are important to reflect upon, as they give insights into our ability to adapt to unprecedented, challenging and fast-moving situations and recognise new skills we have practiced in response to these changes.

Employers may now be starting conversations about returning to onsite premises to work. Everyone will have unique responses to these conversations. We know the neurodiverse community is no different, in that changes to work routines will be experienced uniquely. However, if we do not reflect, discuss and develop plans, the transition back to onsite work will be more difficult than it has to be. Remembering new skills practiced during the transition to working from home can give insight into strengths that can be used in the transition back to onsite work.

There is a reflection tool which accompanies this paper. This tool can be used by anyone to reflect and prepare for the potential experiences they will experience in the transition back to onsite work. A return to work plan can be built from the reflection insights.

2 Reflection for return to onsite work

This reflection tool has two parts and is designed to help neurodiverse employees prepare for a successful return to onsite work post COVID 19 changes. Some of these potential experiences listed may be relevant and some may not. Please feel free to disregard the irrelevant experiences.

This list is obviously not extensive and therefore there are empty areas where individual experiences can be placed and reflected upon as well. Please feel free to talk with your support people if exploring this document has brought up thoughts or challenges that you want to discuss.

Part 1: Reflect on potential experiences you may have when returning to onsite work		
Potential experiences that will be different to what has been the routine since work from home routines have been in place.	Will this concern me? Yes or No or N/A (not applicable)	What could I do to help myself not be significantly affected by this?
New waking time		<i>i.e. practice getting up at the new wake time a few days before you actually have to, practice going to sleep earlier so I am not so tired too.</i>
Different morning routine		<i>i.e. acknowledge it is different, write the routine plan down and when it has been able to be followed, give yourself a reward for handling this change.</i>
Preparation and dressing of different clothing styles		<i>i.e. practice the morning routine and wear those work clothes in the last work from home days so your body gets used to preparing them and wearing them again</i>
Public transport daily		
Driving in traffic daily		
Paying for parking		
Navigating entry to work with high touch areas like door handles		

Potentially different building entry procedures i.e. employee temperature checks prior to entry or different security processes than what you experienced pre COVID.		
My desk/pc set up has been moved or has to be moved to make 1.5mtrs social distance in place		
Office smells different to what I remember it to be		
New team members are present who I don't know are present		
Old team members have resigned or have changed roles		
Work packages are new or have changed		
If the client decides to use a roster system that is half of the section coming into the workplace on certain days of the week and the other half working from home.		

If the client decides to return staff on a gradual basis		
Feeling more tired or energetic because my energy is being used differently than it has been when working from home		
My work habits have changed at home, and this flexibility of taking breaks like you may have at home now may change and having to fit back in with lunch /morning tea at a certain time		
Use of lunchrooms may have changed due to social distancing rules		
Use of kitchen rooms may have changed due to social distancing rules		
You may be around someone who randomly sneezes.		
You may be around someone who randomly coughs.		
Your colleague shows more signs of anxiety than you remember them doing pre COVID		
You have less time for after work hobbies due to travel time		

You have less time with your family than you have whilst working from home.		
Time spent at work in social situations will likely increase being onsite.		

Part 2: Developing a plan

Consider what potential return to work experience could have a level 4 or 5 effect.

Then, build a strategy or plan to mitigate this challenge. Refer to the example below and add your own to the table

Which potential return to work experience would I like to build a strategy for?	What strategy can I use to mitigate this?	What resources do I need to achieve this mitigation?	Who can I enlist to support me achieve this goal?	What could my support people do to help?	When do I need to start this activity
<i>Travelling on public transport will be anxiety provoking for me as I am worried, I will touch germs on the bus, and I am scared I will turn up at work unable to focus.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Talk to my support staff 2. Practice travelling on public transport to my favourite places 3. Carry hand sanitizer in my bag and use whenever I feel the need to 4. Remind myself I am doing a hard activity, and therefore it is understandable it is difficult 5. Rewards for practicing difficult things 6. Set up simple tasks for my first days at work so I can still achieve my work tasks. <p><i>Remember deep breathing techniques to calm my sensory system</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Credit on my public transport card. 2. A reward plan 3. A planning session (over the phone) with my support staff. 4. Hand sanitizer I can carry in my bag 	<p>My support staff My psychologist</p>	<p>My support staff could be on call if I need to talk to them when I am on the bus</p>	<p>7 days before I return to work</p>