



COVID-19 PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLNESS GUIDE:

RETURNING TO THE NEW NORMAL

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The COVID-19 pandemic has led to many dramatic changes including the way we learn, work, communicate and socialize, and even grieve and say goodbye. Some people may find comfort in new routines that they developed during the pandemic, while others may long for the routines and ways of pre-pandemic life. As we start to move forward, we will continue to be faced with changes and will need to modify the way we interact to ensure our health and safety. This may be challenging. However, it also offers us the opportunity to determine how we can actively define our “new normal.” Maybe there are some changes you were forced to make that you want to continue because you like them or maybe there are some new things that you would like to try. To help you cope with continued changes and re-define your new normal, here are some tips.

Move Beyond Anxiety and Uncertainty

- Pause and pay attention to what you are feeling and thinking
 - Notice any disappointment or anxiety over the uncertainty that remains
 - Notice any anger or frustration (e.g., that certain choices are out of your hands)
 - Notice any guilt after making tough decisions (e.g., you want to keep your children safe at home, but you have to go back to work and daycare is your only alternative childcare option)
- Notice any judgments or worries about the future that are adding to your stress
 - Recognize judgmental things you say to yourself (e.g., this isn’t the “right” way to return to work, this transition back should not be so hard)
 - Pay attention to your worries about the future (e.g., “I’m going to get sick”)
 - Acknowledge things you are doing that are making you feel drained
- Do things that are in your control
 - Identify what is out of your control (e.g., changing school schedules, other people’s behavior, the world, your thoughts, etc.) and what [you can control](#) (i.e., most often, our actions)
 - Check in with yourself to see if you are struggling to change what you can’t control
 - Decide how and with whom you spend your free time
 - Determine what steps you will take to protect yourself
- Focus on the present more than the past or the future



- Notice what you can hear, smell, see, touch, and what you are feeling
- Bring yourself back to the present when your mind wanders to the past or the future
- Remember, you are not alone

Move Beyond Your Grief

- Acknowledge what you have lost, like routines, jobs, activities, graduations, and planned vacations
- Give yourself permission to feel your feelings about these losses
- Be kind and patient with yourself as you feel your feelings
- Share your feelings with others with similar losses or who can comfort you
- Let go of expectations of “how things should be”
- Consider new ways of how things can be

Create a New Normal

- Determine new routines and ways of doing things
 - Make plans that support your wellness
 - Accept and embrace these new plans
- Decide on activities or traditions you want to add to your life
 - Think about and talk with others about the good things that happened during the pandemic that you want to keep doing
- Develop new ways to [emotionally cope](#)
 - Practice skills that helped you manage stress in the past
- Live your life based on your values
 - Identify your [values](#) - they can serve as a compass to help you make tough decisions
 - Ask yourself: What do I want to stand for? How do I want to take care of myself? Look after my loved ones? Treat other people? What helped me cope during the pandemic?
 - Identify steps to take (no matter how small!) related to things that matter to you most
 - Try to do at least one small thing each day
 - Make choices based on your values, especially in challenging circumstances