



## Managing Employee Return-to-Work During COVID-19

For managers, the COVID-19 pandemic is a new kind of crisis that no one has dealt with before. The crisis will pass at some point, but the reality is that many businesses will struggle to return-to-work amidst the pandemic. Open and clear lines of communication will be critical to the rebuild. Here are some recommendations for managers to think about as they lead their workforce back to the office:

- **Reassure employees that their safety is top priority.** It is important that preventative measures are taken in the workplace to prevent infection. Safety information should be disseminated to employees before and displayed after the return to the office. A sample policy can be found here: [www.shrm.org](http://www.shrm.org)
- **Manage the yearning for collaboration.** After being away from the office for an extended period, employees will likely have an increased desire to collaborate, craving face-to-face encounters with their coworkers. It is important to make this possible while at the same time enforcing social distancing.
- **Manage the anxiety.** Employees may also desire to avoid other employees. Remind them of safety policies and social distancing. Focus on policies and productivity.
- **Share information liberally.** Managers should be open and as transparent as possible to employees about the effects the pandemic has had to the business. Remind employees what the goals are and where the business currently stands in achieving those goals.
- **Address the elephant in the room.** Layoffs may have already happened and returning workers will be nervous. Employees appreciate straight talk, even when it's not good news. Decide on a way to responsibly address what is happening. Everyone will be looking for information to plan for the future.

**Call your BHS Care Coordinator at 800-245-1150. They can arrange for an appointment with a licensed professional who can provide free and confidential assistance for issues including work-related stress, anxiety and distress.**



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