



more information

Contact your local
HR office to find
your agency's
EAP Administrator
or search OPM's
Work-Life Contact
Tool available at:
opm.gov/CCLContact

Additional
information
is available at
opm.gov/worklife



Tips for Work-Life Coordinators

Employee Assistance Program

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources and services are available to all employees. In the face of unprecedented challenges related to the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is a great time for Work-Life Coordinators to remind agencies about the services available through EAP.

- **Remind all employees about the EAP.**

Whether it's helping employees navigate transitions, find more satisfaction, or maximize physical and emotional wellbeing, the EAP is here to assist.

- **Check-in with employees frequently.**

As a Work-Life Coordinator, you are uniquely positioned to serve as a resource to help employees navigate their EAP options.

- **Equip managers to share EAP solutions.**

Managers have a first-hand perspective on employee performance and needs. OPM's Toolkit for Managers is a resource for managers to learn and understand the various work-life programs and practices.

OPM's Work-Life staff is here to assist.
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Tips for Work-Life Coordinators and Supervisors

Mental Health

Caring for the mental well-being of Federal employees is always a priority. As we prepare for the eventual return of employees to the workplace, Work-Life Coordinators and Supervisors should strive to be aware of the mental health factors that may affect an employee's transition back into their work location and the resources available.

- **Be aware that employees may be returning to the workplace with concerns and responsibilities that may not have been present before the pandemic.**

Flexibilities are encouraged to help employees who may need modified workplace schedules or arrangements to deal with unforeseen circumstances.

- **Talk with employees and be aware of their concerns.**

Offer information about agency resources such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and Family and Dependent Care resources.

- **Be sensitive to employee concerns that may contribute to anxiety.**

Examples of concerns include safe commuting, disinfecting protocols, and plans for social distancing at the workplace.

- **Put a plan in place to communicate and discuss agency defined procedures and processes regarding return to work protocols.**

Help empower employees and help alleviate potential anxiety by keeping employees informed on agency procedures.

- **Ask for employee input on solutions.**

Facilitate an open dialogue regarding how to handle new challenges that may arise. Seek and implement employee feedback where possible.

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Tips for Work-Life Coordinators and Supervisors

Grieving Support

It is important for agency leaders, managers, and supervisors to be sensitive to the possibility that employees may be experiencing grief related to COVID-19 upon returning to a regular work schedule. As we strive to overcome this global pandemic as a Federal community, Work-Life Coordinators and Supervisors are uniquely positioned to highlight agency Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) as an effective and available resource to support employees who may be grieving.

- **Grieving is complex.**

While everyone grieves in their own way, it is common to experience difficulty concentrating, physical reactions such as headaches or lethargy, and other side effects that may impact an employee's performance in the workplace.

- **Consider that employees who are parents or guardians may be worried about how their return to work may affect the children in their care.**

Managing new care situations for dependents can bring a renewed sense of grief or anxiety over the loss of prior caregivers, arrangements, and schedules.

- **Review Federal resources from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).**

These resources were crafted for the Federal workforce and the general public and provide expert information on these sensitive issues.

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Tips for Work-Life Coordinators and Supervisors

Meaningful Conversation Starters

Supervisors should strive to maintain an employee-focused mindset when considering challenges employees may be facing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Supervisors should work to understand employee needs and offer workplace flexibilities when possible. The following open-ended questions can help guide a conversation that can result in meaningful information:

- **What are you most concerned about?**
Supervisors can begin the conversation by allowing employees to guide the discussion and focus on topics most important to them.
- **What workplace support do you value most for assisting you as we progress towards resuming a normal work schedule?**
Supervisors are encouraged to share resources available through EAP to demonstrate the possible program supports and manage expectations.
- **What are your expectations from me and the organization?**
A clear understanding of what employees need and expect can assist supervisors in holding productive and transparent conversations with staff.
- **How can I help you move forward?**
Understanding the common goal of assisting staff in phasing back to the office environment with minimal stress allows supervisors to ask what the employee needs and make that transition successful.
- **When should we check-in again?**
Supervisors can offer regular and continued support as employees learn to manage their responsibilities.

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Tips for Work-Life Coordinators and Supervisors

Dependent Care

Employees with dependent care responsibilities may need support during the phased return to work. These employees may need to phase back to a regular work situation at a pace that is responsive to their needs. Here are some tips for Work-Life Coordinators and Supervisors to help employees as they consider returning to work.

- **Remind employees that there are work-life programs tailored to support working caretakers.**

Utilize your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to direct employees to a wide range of resources available to assist with the care of a child or an adult or elderly family member in need.

- **Help employees phase back to a regular work situation.**

Determine a pace that is responsive to each employee's unique needs. Have conversations among Work-Life Coordinators, Supervisors, and employees to determine the best path forward.

- **Encourage the continued application of workplace flexibilities, to include the use of maximum telework.**

Employees with dependent care responsibilities may benefit from continuing to exercise workplace flexibilities. Review [OPM's Maxi-Flex Guidance](#) for additional details.

- **Explore working with agency vendors/contractors that provide dependent care supports to the workforce to meet emerging or changing needs.**

OPM encourages agency Work-Life Coordinators to partner with their provider to respond to the workforce.

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