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Slide 1



## *Participant Guide*

## Slide 2




### Learning Objectives

- Discuss the importance of shared responsibility when returning to the work site
- Understand your employer's re-entry plan
- Address common concerns about returning to work
- Identify ways to prepare for the transition

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## Slide 3



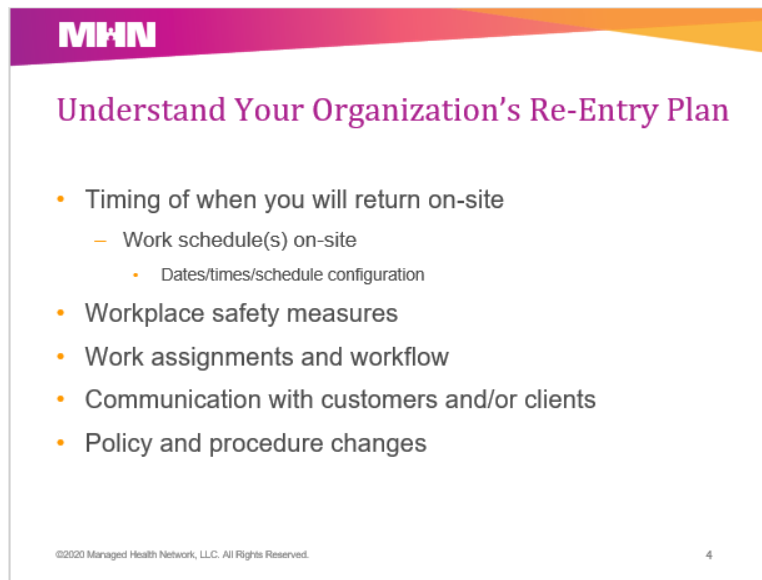
### Shared Responsibility

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, *everyone* has been called upon to act together to try and prevent its spread
- This need to act together and to protect one another continues back in the workplace
- *Everyone* needs to respect and follow the guidelines and safety measures being instituted within your organization
  - Safety measures *may* include:
    - Illness and staying home when sick
    - Cleaning and disinfecting your desk and work area
    - Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)
    - Social distancing in the workplace
    - Work meetings (face-to-face or telephonic)
    - Essential business travel
    - What else?

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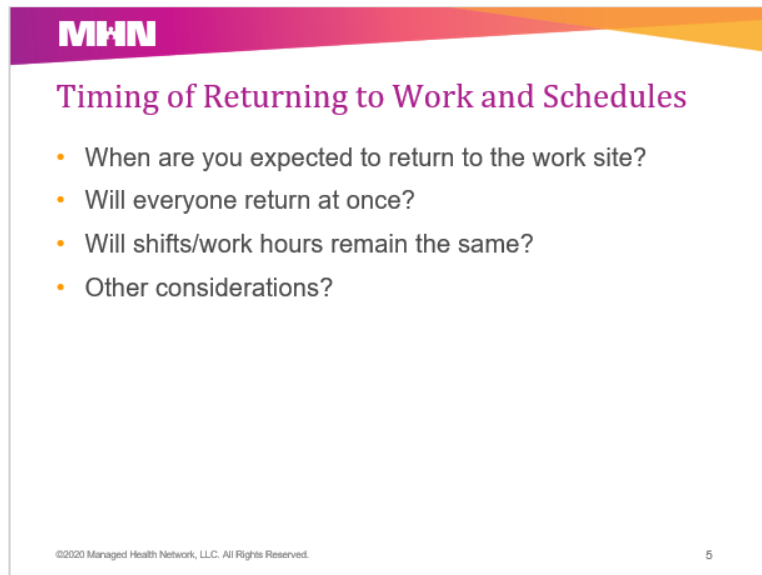
### Understand Your Organization's Re-Entry Plan

- Timing of when you will return on-site
  - Work schedule(s) on-site
    - Dates/times/schedule configuration
- Workplace safety measures
- Work assignments and workflow
- Communication with customers and/or clients
- Policy and procedure changes

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### Timing of Returning to Work and Schedules

- When are you expected to return to the work site?
- Will everyone return at once?
- Will shifts/work hours remain the same?
- Other considerations?

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## Workplace Safety Measures

New protocols and procedures for:

- Health screening procedures (as applicable)
- Cleaning and disinfecting procedures
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Physical distancing measures (including changes to the physical workspace)
- Customer and/or visitor contact
- Business travel
- Communications regarding exposures or infections
- What else?

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## Work Assignments and Workflow

Will there be changes in how work gets done and by whom?

- Workflow
- Job duties
- Performance expectations
- Processes and procedures
- Policy changes or adjustments

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### Communication with Customers and Vendors

- Do customers and vendors need to know how your organization plans to reopen and re-establish business processes?
  - Who will communicate with them?
- How are you expected to interact with customers, visitors, and vendors?
  - Social distancing policies or equipment
  - Number of customers on-site
  - Use of PPE as indicated
- Is a plan in place to understand/follow safety precautions being put in place by customers and vendors?
  - Who is responsible for obtaining that information and communicating it within your team?

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### Understand Additional Policy Modifications or Changes

- Attendance
- Meal and rest breaks
- Telecommuting
- Paid leave
- Time off requests
- *What else?*

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## Common Concerns

*“I’m nervous about returning to work and getting sick.”*

*“I’m nervous about returning to work and getting sick because I have an underlying condition (or am 65+).”*

*“I’m concerned about returning to work and bringing COVID-19 home to a “vulnerable” family member.”*

*“I have young children and do not yet have a solution for daycare.”*

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## Common Concerns *(cont.)*

*“I’m nervous about returning to work and getting sick.”*

Anxiety is a normal reaction to uncertainty

- Understand your workplace risk level
- Understand how the virus spreads
- Adhere to safety and prevention guidelines
- Live a healthy lifestyle
- Stay connected
- Help others if you can
- Limit the amount of time you spend on social media/the news

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## Common Concerns *(cont.)*

*Understand Your Workplace Risk Profile*

**Occupational Risk Pyramid for COVID-19**



OSHA guidelines:

- **Very High** – Health care workers treating infected patients
- **High** – Medical and support personnel who are exposed to infected patients
- **Medium** – workers who might be in close proximity to a population that *may* carry the virus
- **Low** – minimal interaction with the public and other co-workers

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## Common Concerns *(cont.)*

*"I'm nervous about returning to work and getting sick because I have an underlying condition (or am 65 years old or older)."*

- If you have an underlying medical condition, obtain advice from a medical professional about going back to into the workplace
  - Talk with your doctor if you have an underlying condition
    - Obtain accurate advice about your specific medical situation
  - If you are advised against returning on-site to the workplace, talk with your manager or Human Resources about possible accommodations

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### Common Concerns *(cont.)*

*"I'm concerned about returning to work and bringing COVID-19 home to a 'vulnerable' family member."*

- Talk with your manager or human resources about possible accommodations
- Practice recommended prevention measures (entire household):
  - Avoid crowds and social gatherings
  - Keep at least 6 feet away from other people
  - Wash your hands often
  - Avoid touching surfaces in public areas, such as elevator buttons and handrails
    - Practice rigorous hand cleaning hygiene if you must touch common surfaces
  - Avoid using public transportation, such as the train or bus, if possible
  - Avoid riding in a car with members of different households
  - Wear a cloth face covering

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### Common Concerns *(cont.)*

*"I have young children and do not yet have a solution for daycare."*

- Consider possible child-care options
  - Referrals through Work-Life services (available through the EAP)
  - Referrals through friends, family, and colleagues
- If you don't yet have a solution
  - Find out *if*
    - You can continue to work remotely
    - Other accommodations can be made
    - Taking short-term or intermittent leave is an option

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## Be Aware of Different Concerns about COVID-19

- Keep in mind that people have different types and levels of concerns about COVID-19
  - Acknowledge and be respectful of differences
- Be discerning about over-sharing information or news media accounts about the virus
- Be mindful that people have had very different experiences with the pandemic
- Be respectful of maintaining confidentiality about personal medical information

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## Preparing to Return to the Workplace

- Does your daily routine (am/pm) need to change?
- Does your commute to work remain the same?
- Consider what will be different when you return to the work site
  - Social distance measures will be in place
  - You may need to wear personal protective wear
  - What else?
- Be aware of and tend to your own fears/concerns
- Discuss major challenges with your manager as soon as possible
- Identify what you can do that will help you to feel organized and in control of your schedule

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## Summary

- Thoroughly understand your organization's return-to-work-plan
- Do your part in following your organization's safety practices, policies and procedures
- Be aware of and sensitive to different types and levels of concern
- Be patient with yourself
- Practice good self-care
- Remain flexible as things change

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## Resources

- Internal Resources
  - Immediate Supervisor/Manager
  - Human Resources
- External Resources
  - EAP
    - Family issues
    - Stress management
    - Parenting issues
    - Other
  - Work-Life (available through the EAP)
    - Childcare
    - Elder care
    - Financial
    - Legal
    - Other

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## Handout A: Understand Your Organization's Approach to Workplace Safety

Look to your manager and HR for guidance on regulations and policies for the following:

- Health screening procedures (if applicable).
  - What health screening procedures are necessary and for whom?
  - How will infectious or potentially infectious individuals be isolated to protect colleagues, customers, and visitors? \*
  - What health screening procedures are optional?
  - Who will administer them?
  - How will the employee's privacy be maintained?
  - What record keeping will be expected?
  - What criteria will be used for determining when people can return to work?
  - What if an employee says that they have a family member at home who has symptoms of COVID-19 or who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
  
- Cleaning and disinfecting procedures. \*
  - What changes are being made to the cleaning and disinfecting procedures for the facilities?
  - Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the best defense for everyone. What hand washing protocol is being implemented for employees?
  - If running water is unavailable are hand-sanitizer stations available?
  
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
  - Will personal protective equipment (PPE) will be required and where?
  - Are gloves or masks being provided? Or, are employees responsible for providing their own masks?
  - What happens if someone forgets their PPE at home? Will spares be available?
  
- Physical distancing measures (including any changes to the physical workspace).
  - What physical distancing measures have been put in place? Will spaces be laid out or used differently?
  - Will there be rules regarding numbers of people allowed at any given time in break rooms, restrooms, conference rooms and other common areas?
    - Will meetings continue to be held virtually in order to limit personal contact, or will team members gather in-person?
  
- Understand exposure-response protocol.
  - What should you do if you are diagnosed with COVID-19?
  - What should you do if a roommate or member of your household is diagnosed with COVID-19?

- What if you suspect that you've been exposed to COVID-19 either in or outside of the workplace?
- Under what circumstances is your organization responsible for communicating exposure/infection to customers/vendors? Who will provide that communication?
- Business Travel.
  - How will business travel be managed going forward? What guidelines have been issued for employees that have to travel to do their jobs or visit sites outside the workspace?

**Content adapted from:**

- [www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/Pages/communicable-diseases.aspx?iesrc=ctr](http://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/Pages/communicable-diseases.aspx?iesrc=ctr)
- [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html)

## **Handout B: How COVID-19 Spreads**

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly through close contact from person-to-person. Some people without symptoms may be able to spread the virus. We are still learning about how the virus spreads and the severity of illness it causes.

### **The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.**

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms.

### **The virus spreads easily between people.**

How easily a virus spreads from person-to-person can vary. Some viruses are highly contagious, like measles, while other viruses do not spread as easily. Another factor is whether the spread is sustained, which means it goes from person-to-person without stopping.

### **The virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading very easily and sustainably between people.**

Information from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic suggest that this virus is spreading more efficiently than influenza, but not as efficiently as measles, which is highly contagious.

### **The virus may be spread in other ways.**

It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. This is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about how this virus spreads.

**Source:** [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html)

## **Handout C: Protect Yourself and Others**

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. You can take steps to slow the spread.

**Know how it spreads** (*see Handout B*)

### **Wash your hands often**

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

### **Avoid close contact**

- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick, even inside your home.** If possible, maintain 6 feet between the person who is sick and other household members.
- **Put distance between yourself and other people outside of your home.**
  - Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
  - Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people.
  - Do not gather in groups.
  - Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings.
  - Keeping distance from others is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.

### **Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others**

- You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick.
- Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities.
  - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected.
- Do NOT use a facemask meant for a healthcare worker.
- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.

### **Cover coughs and sneezes**

- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
- Throw used tissues in the trash.

- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.

### **Clean and disinfect**

- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily. This includes tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, and sinks.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Then, use a household disinfectant. Most common EPA-registered household disinfectants external icon will work.

### **Monitor Your Health**

- Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Especially important if you are running essential errands, going into the office or workplace, and in settings where it may be difficult to keep a physical distance of 6 feet.
- Take your temperature if symptoms develop.
  - Don't take your temperature within 30 minutes of exercising or after taking medications that could lower your temperature, like acetaminophen.

**Source:** [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html)

## **Handout D: Support Your Mental and Physical Health**

Keeping yourself physically healthy can significantly ward off the negative effects of stress. Your body's response to stressors will be less extreme, and you will have a more efficient ability to "heal" during those times when stress may take a toll.

**Healthy diet.** Eat nutritious meals, keep sodium and fat content low (or reasonable) to prevent stress on the heart and circulatory system.

**Take breaks throughout the day.** Set a timer to maintain regular break times. It is not good for our bodies to sit for several hours at a time.

**Increase your level of exercise.** Aerobic and strength training exercises increase the efficiency of your body's metabolism and helps to ward off the effects of stress. Additionally, your body may become more efficient in self-healing. Exercise is a great way to restore your body's physical reactions to stress since activity helps to discharge stress-related energy in a productive way.

**Maintain a normal sleep routine.** The average adult needs approximately 8 hours of sleep per night. If you rob yourself of an hour or two of sleep each night, you build up a significant "sleep debt" that puts physical stress on your body. Regularly depriving yourself of sleep decreases your body's efficiency and does not allow enough time for your body to rest, restore, and rebuild.

**Pursue healthy leisure activities.** Find an activity that helps you mentally and/or physically remove yourself from stressors. Gardening, fishing, reading, or jogging are all good ways to create time for yourself and de-stress.

**Engage in active relaxation.** Active relaxation requires that you engage in activities in which you mentally focus on reducing the physical symptoms of stress. By changing the physical manifestations of stress (such as slowing down your breathing) you correspondingly feel mentally or emotionally less stressed. Visual imagery, deep breathing, and muscle tensing are all techniques used to de-stress.

**Limit alcohol consumption.**

What else?

By taking care of yourself you will be more resilient and better able to respond to the stressors and challenges that come your way.