



## COVID-19 NEXT PHASE ANXIETY: How to cope as we return to our new normal



The COVID-19 quarantine experience has impacted everyone. For some it was an easy transition into the safety of their bubble, yet for others, a terrifying proposition that came with real challenges. We know that it's normal for children, teens and adults to have strong feelings, reactions and changes in behaviour when faced with uncertainty. And now, as restrictions begin to ease and we slowly start to return to our everyday lives, we need to adjust our coping strategies as we grapple with the different challenges this will bring.

### How to cope as we return to our new normal

While it is reasonable to remain concerned about the coronavirus as you start back at work, children head back to school and our new normal commences, there are simple and effective steps you can take to help manage your concerns and those of the people around you.

- 1 KNOW THE FACTS:** Get information or updates from reputable sources. Avoid getting information from social media or second-hand information from people who are not experts in the field. Instead, look at official government websites to understand what you can do to remain safe as we start to return to our everyday lives. Useful sources include:
  - [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)
  - [www.health.gov.nz](http://www.health.gov.nz)
  - [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)
- 2 PRACTICE GOOD HYGIENE:** Follow official advice and practice good hygiene. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20-seconds, use alcohol-based hand sanitisers, cough and sneeze into your elbow, don't touch your face, and if you do have any cold or flu symptoms stay at home and ring your GP.
- 3 KEEP THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE:** People who take care of their health and practice good self-care are more resistant to the virus. And, whilst it's understandable to be concerned about a potential second wave of the virus, it's still important to remember that most people who contract the virus, make a full recovery. Keeping things in perspective will help you stay calm.
- 4 ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS:** Acknowledge how you're feeling about returning to work, or restrictions being lifted. Children feel loved, cared for and safe when they know others experience the same feelings that they do. Similarly, adults can normalise how they're feeling about the situation by talking with others. Share your concerns or worries with friends, family members or a trusted colleague. Or, contact Benestar for free, confidential coaching and support.
- 5 SHIFT YOUR THINKING:** It's easy to fall into a mindset of worrying about what could happen and an anxious mind often moves to the worst-case scenarios. To help shift your thinking and to make your return to work a little more easier, focus on what you can control and ask yourself "What is the one positive step I can take now?"
- 6 MANAGE YOUR REACTIONS:** Learn effective stress management skills such as mindfulness, impulse control, and progressive muscle relaxation. Head to Benehub or download the Benestar App for some free breathing and mindfulness exercises. To visit BeneHub head to [www.benestar.com](http://www.benestar.com).
- 7 STAY SAFE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORT:** Traveling on public transport is unavoidable for many. If you need to use public transport make sure to keep a safe distance between yourself and others when possible. Avoid touching hard surfaces and use contactless payment options. When pressing buttons try to use your elbow or cover your hand with a tissue. Make sure to travel with handsantiser and tissues and use them regularly. Avoid touching your face, and if you need to cough or sneeze do it away from others and into your elbow.
- 8 LOOK AFTER YOURSELF:** It's important that you look after yourself, this can still be challenging when you have others to consider. Focus on the basics, eating well, exercising, and getting enough sleep each night. Try to take time out to do things you enjoy and allow yourself some time to relax.

For free, confidential coaching and support call Benestar on:

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