

Getting Back to “Normal”

As we contemplate what a post-COVID-19 environment will look like, we should be mindful of the stresses that “getting back to normal” may create for Airmen.



It is hard to believe, but some Airmen have never worked in a pre-COVID-19 environment – they have only known shift work, video calls, and alternate work locations. Seasoned veterans and family members too may be feeling the pains of adjusting to one change after another.

If you find yourself struggling during this period of nearly constant transition, you are not alone. Below are some tips to help you find your groove and adjust to “the new normal”:

- ❖ **Create & follow routines** – At the beginning of COVID we set up new routines to help us to be successful and stay sane. Routines help with the stresses of transition and provide stability for family members, including pets, who also need to get used to “the new normal”.
- ❖ **Take frequent breaks** – This will help you to re-focus if you find your mind wandering, or if you feel overwhelmed. Research shows that regular breaks can increase productivity, creativity, engagement, and job satisfaction.
- ❖ **Take care of your body** – Get plenty of sleep, exercise regularly, and eat healthy. When you take care of your body, you take care of your mind and your emotions.
- ❖ **Create a contingency plan for childcare** – Just finding affordable childcare can be a challenge these days. Having contingency plans will help reduce stress if sudden changes in your work schedule occur.
- ❖ **Stay vigilant** – Although many have received vaccines and work routines are returning to normal, we still need to follow CDC and OSD guidance to stay safe. Get the facts about vaccines from reputable sources. The sooner we achieve “herd immunity”, the sooner the masks can come off, and we can get back to “normal.”
- ❖ **Be a good wingman** – Check on your fellow Airmen regularly, especially if you notice signs of increased stress or anxiety such as:
 - Reduced productivity
 - Loss of interest
 - Disheveled appearance
 - Reclusive behaviors
 - Sudden emotional outbursts

We’ve said all along that we will get through this together. If you or one of your Airmen needs additional support or guidance during this transition, get your leadership involved, or reach out to the ART. We are all in this together, and together we can reach a healthy new normal.

Questions? Contact the ART, 363ISRW.ART.363ISRW@us.af.mil or 757-764-9316