

## Some thoughts on Transitioning to the “New Normal”

As we transition into the new normal, remember to keep your mental and physical health as a top priority. It’s perfectly OK to take a step back, go at your own pace or set boundaries as things begin to change. Here are some tips to help you take care of your mental health as we ease back in:

1. **Give yourself some grace:** It’s OK if you find yourself feeling a bit anxious about COVID-19 restrictions loosening. You may have days where it feels easier than others. Whether you’re overjoyed, reluctant or both, your feelings are valid, and you can adjust at your own pace.
2. **Focus on what you can control:** You may not be able to control the restrictions in your state, but you can control where you go and how you protect yourself and your mental health. For example, if reading the news is stressful, take a break from reading it every day. Having patience with yourself and others, and staying flexible will also help.
3. **Set a new routine:** Some aspects of your life may have changed in the last year — and you can expect more change as we move forward. Maybe you worked from home or your kids attended school online. Try creating a new routine to help you ease into the change. This could look like waking up earlier to prepare for the return to the office or making time for physical exercise.
4. **Create healthy boundaries:** We have all experienced a range of emotions over the last year, and this transition will be different for everyone. Focus on what you are comfortable with and what will be best for your mental health. It’s OK to set boundaries with friends, family and colleagues if you’re feeling overwhelmed or anxious. If that feels overwhelming, start small and work from there.
5. **Do activities you enjoy:** We’ve all missed some activities over the past year, so to help ease into this transition, you can start to think about doing the things you haven’t been able to do. Maybe that’s meeting up with friends at a restaurant, going shopping or attending your favorite exercise class. But it’s important to remember, you only have to do activities you’re comfortable with – don’t jump back into things too quickly. If you try something new and find yourself feeling overwhelmed, it’s OK to take a step back.

Returning to normal may not be easy for everyone, and if you’re feeling anxious about public spaces opening up it’s OK! Take things at a pace that you’re comfortable with and try doing activities you enjoy to make things easier. Leaning on your social support network will make all the difference.