



INTERNATIONAL WEBINARS AND LIVE EVENTS

“ Adapting to Business as Unusual: How to Prepare Yourself Emotionally for the Return to the Workplace”

by UN Knowledge and Learning Commons & UN Staff Counsellor's Office in Geneva – 19 May 2020

Mary Leahy, Staff Counsellor

- **Current situation:** Now week 10 of Covid-19 measures. Limited number of staff to return to Palais des Nations (30% or less) on 8 June 2020 followed by re-assessment at the end of June.
- **Some established practices** by UNOG Staff Counsellor Office (email staffcounsellor@un.org):
 - Workshops in building resilience.
 - (Online) mindfulness session – twice a week (in English and French)
- Some **new concerns:** Handshakes, more concerns for security, what about the “open-access” plans?
- **It is normal to feel mixed feelings in this abnormal times** (some may be happy to go back to the office, others have concerns about the “new normal”, or disappointed that it will take some time before going back)
- **Stigma:** be aware of your biases and prejudices. People might not feel comfortable to speak about their mental problems. Stigma around Covid-19. Social stigma around the people from certain country or of certain nationality or after the person has been discharged after the quarantine. – We need to be aware of that “this is a fear, but it is not based on any reality”
- **New routine:** What will the day look like with all these changes?
- It is important to **speak with your supervisor** – consider going back 1-2 a weeks in the beginning: prepare your questions in advance. Important to have a private conversation with your manager vs. team meetings.

Roza van der Heide, Associate Staff Counsellor

1. **Transparent and open communication** with everyone in your team.
2. **Give yourself time to adjust:** feeling of powerlessness is normal – shift to things you can control.
 - Read the guidelines, know the rules of the host country, if you go on a field trip.
 - Maintain your own distance, take care of your nutrition, exercise, free time.
 - Schedule some “time to worry”, Keep a journal (*Things that you are grateful for – which do not have to be “big”, What made me laugh? Today I accomplished... Today I helped someone with... What am I proud of?*)
3. Accept that the situation is uncertain and that **you cannot control everything**
4. **Living in the present:** mindfulness, breathing, observing the nature. Online activities for your body and mind: <https://iseek.un.org/content/online-activities-your-body-and-mind>
5. **Focus on the positive aspects:** daily practice of gratitude is the best for resilience.
6. **Talk to someone about your worries and concerns.**