

# Chief Financial Office- Audit & Assurance Servant Leadership Applied: Hybrid Work Environment Return To Work Toolkit

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USDA Forest Service – Materials provided by Martin Gutierrez –  
Conflict Management Prevention Center Manager.

## Return To Work Toolkit Contents



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## Return to Work Toolkit Tips

### Preparing Yourself

#### *Rest & Recovery*

When engaging emotional conversations, the amount of energy that it takes can be comparable to strenuous physical activity. To avoid fatigue and compounded stress over time sleep; the average adult relies on between 6-8 hours of sleep to function optimally under stressful moments. [More information...](#)

#### *Proper Nutrition*

Fueling our bodies with proper nutrition is crucial to maintaining stamina, attention, and energy during lengthy processes. Healthy and balanced diets include water, proteins, fiber, and cutting out artificial sugar sources. Consider eating a handful of nuts before meetings for better focus. [More information...](#)

#### *Role-play- Script it*

Preparing to succeed in life takes practice, repetition, and dedication to training. Champions dedicate time to practicing their craft before performing. Consider role-playing or practicing your words, active listening, and potential scenarios of mistrust with a third-party. [More information...](#)

#### *Knock-Wait-Announce-Continue (KWAC)*

We may not always know the comfort level of folks around us so consider knocking or announcing yourself prior to approaching a person in our outside of their cubicle. Consider asking that person how comfortable they are speaking to you in person and how far away to stand. Please do not assume that the comfort level you carry is the same level of others on any given day or time. [More information...](#)

#### *Sound-Footprint Awareness (S-F-A)*

When having conversations in your cubicle please consider your sound-footprint for those working around you. While in the virtual environment we have total liberty to determine our noise-level. Now that we return back, we must be aware of others when speaking over Teams, Cell-phones, and with one another. Consider the use of headphones to limit the amount of sound resonating from your area and be mindful of the noise level in those interactions. Also, remember our public and outdoor spaces, collaborate with your supervisor when you take personal calls to minimize the noise level in your area. [More information...](#)

#### *Business Attire (Dress for Respect)*

Whether you are dusting off your go-to office attire or purchasing new digs for returning back, consider the message you convey to others by the clothes you choose to wear while at the office. While in the virtual environment we have total liberty to determine the nature of our outerwear. Now that we return, we must be aware of others and our commitment to maintaining a positive work environment. With limited time in the office pledge to contribute your part to a safe and positive environment by wearing clothing that is respectful. [More information...](#)

#### *Stretch and Walk (Keep it Moving)*

Surveys show that in the virtual environment most workers moved and stretched less when compared to being in the office. National productivity jumped almost 3.1% in the virtual posture but at what cost to our physical well-being? While in the virtual environment we tend to have set



movements within the safety of our property. Now that we return, we must be intentional in our efforts to get fresh air and natural light, exercise during our breaks and stretch to avoid injury and pain. Remaining at your work-station without breaks and movement will not make the day go by faster but it will increase your stress levels exponentially. [More information...](#)

#### *Consolidate Errands (Plan Wisely Young Jedi)*

During your days in the office consider completing errands such as grocery-shopping, gasoline filling, dry-cleaning / laundry, post office visits, manicures / pedicures, doctor appointments after your shift to avoid multiple trips away from your domicile and mitigate your gasoline expenses. While in the virtual environment we may have reduced our transportation costs dramatically. Now that we go back to work consider budgeting your return-to-work expenses to lessen the financial and time impact. [More information...](#)

#### *Care Needs (Stop, Collaborate and Listen)*

Returning to the office will be a challenge to many of us who have become accustomed to managing our personal lives without separation from work. Consider the impact returning to the office will have on the care-needs your loved ones have grown accustomed to receiving. Now that we return planning back-up contacts and remote-communication strategies in your absence will reduce your stress levels and provide clarity for those whom you are responsible for while in the office.

#### *Equipment Bag (Pack Test Yourself)*

To avoid panic, confusion, and anxiety from missing essential items consider using an equipment bag which only holds your essential work items such as cords, cables, chargers, mouse, card readers, and any other essential equipment for your day. While in the virtual environment we have total access to the essential equipment we need. Now that we return, we must plan and be more organized to ensure you have what you need to get through your day without worry. [More information...](#)

#### *Snack Pack (Munchie-Management)*

Studies have shown that healthy snacking through the workday increases productivity, alertness and attention to detail, reduces fatigue and recover times, and greatly assists your brain and heart when experiencing stressful work moments. Consider packing a snack-pack of nutritious options such as nuts, fruit, protein, and chocolate as supplements to your other work meals. While in the virtual environment we have total access to nutrition options. Now that we return, we must ensure we have healthy fuel to get us through the day while away from home. [More information...](#)

#### *\*\*Bonus Tip\*\**

Consider keeping a duplicate backup of your equipment bag and snack pack in the vehicle you drive to work to guarantee you are always prepared with what you need.

#### *Social Distancing*

The past few years have been a churning index of social distancing recommendations and requirements. The personal choice of how much physical distance a person is comfortable allowing another to occupy is a recurring theme throughout our history as people. Some cultures thrive being in close physical proximity, while other cultures flourish with wider boundaries. When interacting with colleagues in the office, consider asking their physical distance comfort level before assuming they would be okay with you being close. Also consider doing this before each interaction as you may not know what their present comfort level may be. [More information...](#)





*Emotional Intelligence (Knowing is Half the Battle)*

Returning to the office will be stressful until our routines are normalized. Studies have shown that the transition phase of change management, that is the part of this where you are asked to adopt the change, is the most stressful time. By knowing what your stressors are and identifying healthy techniques to empty your stress cup your work environment will remain healthy and positive for you and your colleagues. Consider using an instrument (included in this training) to measure your weekly stress levels or keep a daily diary of your challenges and success. While in the virtual environment we are in a familiar and controlled space which accommodates our needs and personalities. Now that we return, we must manage our stress for a healthy positive work environment. [More information...](#)

*Nonverbal Communication (What others are really hearing)*

When communicating under stress or in unmanaged conflict studies show that 93% of what is received as communication is nonverbal. That means that 38% of what the other person is hearing is the tone of your voice and 55% what you are doing with your hands and facial gestures. Unfortunately, when we are in unmanaged conflict only 7% of what is received are the actual words you speak. While in the virtual environment we have escaped sight by exercising the liberty of using our camera to our comfort level. Now that we return folks will be able to see us in person and we must pledge to use nonverbal communication in a respectful manner. [More information...](#)

*Diffusing Intense Conversations (Lyrics that Sooth the Soul)*

When you find yourself in an intense conversation that is heating up or someone catches you off guard consider using the following techniques to diffuse an intense interaction: Rephrase and Summarize what the person is communicating so that they understand what you are hearing. By speaking in a calm soothing voice begin asking questions of clarification to allow them to tell their story. While in the virtual environment we are separated from one another and thus not used to intense interactions. Now that we return taking time to share that you are gathering from a person is a good way to ask more questions and get clarification beyond the emotions. [More information...](#)

*Patient, Forgiving, and Slow to Judge (Who are we really?)*

Are you really living the USDA Forest Service values or simply proclaiming them? Studies show that 80% of workplace conflict occurs due to a broken or misunderstood process. If we keep this in mind, then we can exercise patience when confused or caught off guard. In the patient moment take time to become curious and ask questions. While in the virtual environment we have become more independent and self-reliant. Now that we return remember to express gratitude and be prepared to lend a stewarding hand to one another. [More information...](#)

**Questions to Ask Yourself**

How do you feel about this hybrid work environment transition?

What do you think might be causing these feelings to surface?

What are a few things that others need to know about your situation?

What is fun, normal, and productive about working virtually and in the office?

Who in your life might be impacted by you working a hybrid work environment schedule?





Weekly Return to Work Toolkit Self-Assessment

Using the following scale please rate your stress level regarding the hybrid work environment process:

1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10

**Low**

**Average**

**High**

Please select all applicable answers that best describe where the stress you are experiencing from the hybrid work environment process manifests in your life:

Professional Interactions      Describe:

Personal Interactions      Describe:

Physical      Describe:

Other      Describe:

No Impact

Using the following scale please rate how you have handled the conversations with your employees regarding the hybrid work environment process:

1      2      3      4      5

**Poor**

**Good**

**Well**

Has my productivity and attention to other duties been impacted by the hybrid work environment process?      **Yes**      **No**

If Yes, what areas have been impacted:

Based on the Return-to-Work Toolkit training what are three areas I can adjust to return to balance?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.



# Questions?

Martin Gutierrez  
Conflict Management & Prevention Center Manager  
*Albuquerque Service Center – CFO, CIO, HRM*

[Martin.M.Gutierrez@usda.gov](mailto:Martin.M.Gutierrez@usda.gov)  
505-944-4059