Working Remotely: Tips for Employees during COVID-19

1. Remember, these are novel circumstances that everyone is experiencing. Everyone on the team may experience certain levels of anxiety during this time. This Well-Being site at Virginia Tech offers helpful information on health and wellness and other resources.

2. Each individual should evaluate the responsibilities and priorities of their position, considering the impact on customers, and the feasibility of completing work remotely. Share with the team’s supervisor.

3. Confirm technology resources and internet connectivity. Ensure knowledge of collaborative resources, such as Zoom for remote meetings. This Zoom site provides useful tips. Be mindful of home location for Zoom meetings to limit distractions from others or pets, as well as what other participants can see through the webcam.

4. Reinforce accountability with team members regarding how work will be conducted remotely. Keep track of ownership for particular items and leverage tools and technology to keep the work visible.

5. Determine where in the home environment is conducive to remote work. Set expectations with others in the home regarding interactions and availability. Remember to stay focused, remove distractions, and create a route and schedule that works while at home.

6. Consider adding in a physical or mental transition activity to transition "to" and "from" work. Some examples include: listening to music, meditating, stretching, doing a mini-workout routine, taking a walk, calling a friend, doing a mindfulness exercise, taking a deep breath or two, and physically moving things in the workspace, such as closing the computer, moving away and standing up, putting away papers and pens, and turning off lights.

7. Remember to take breaks and exercise good posture. Structure the day as appropriate and maintain boundaries to prevent overwork. Develop and stay consistent with good eating, sleeping, exercise habits, and routines. Team members should align their schedules with other members and the manager.

8. Provide updated contact information to the supervisor.

9. Confirm the preferred method of group communication and how frequently everyone will connect with the supervisor, immediate team, and other colleagues. Brainstorm with team members about capability and knowledge regarding other communication and document sharing software to help with team functioning and productivity. Confirm expectations for responding to internal and external email, phone, or text messages. Be strategic and flexible with team and other meetings.

10. Be sure to communicate any updates or changing circumstances to the supervisor.

11. Be mindful that reasonable accommodations needed in the workplace may be needed at home. Check with ADA and Accessibility Services for more information.

12. Remain connected with team members and allow for missteps along the way. Acknowledge the work completed. Celebrate successes and learn from things that did not go so well. Continually look for ways to make things better or more efficient.