

MENTAL HEALTH MOMENT

VIRTUAL MEETING FATIGUE



As the pandemic response continues over time many employees are reporting increased stress caused by uncertainty, change, hypervigilance & constant adaptation. It is important to understand that stress management skills have never been more important and here are some tips on how to manage *virtual meeting fatigue*.

BUILD IN BREAKS

While virtual meetings have allowed employees to safely work remotely, virtual meetings cause us to focus intently for long periods of time at a small screen. In face-to-face meetings we use a softer glance instead of staring intently for the duration of a meeting. This vigilance activates our stress response and we get fatigued over time. Instead, use a soft glance by taking notes or minimize the video for a few minutes when appropriate. Turn off your video. This does not mean taking time to do something else but letting your eyes rest a moment. Back-to-back meetings? Politely exit 5 minutes early or schedule 55-minute meetings instead of 1 hour. Allow yourself some time to recharge!

REDUCE DISTRACTIONS & STIMULI

Research shows that when people are on video, they tend to spend the most time analyzing their own face. Hide yourself from view by turning off the video. We also tend to analyze other people's backgrounds. This can be distracting, and the stimuli can cause unneeded mental fatigue. Seeing multiple backgrounds can cause us to fatigue more quickly. It feels like we are in many rooms at once. Often the best approach is to have everyone turn off their video except for the person talking. Focus on the speaker or presentation material and avoid settings that create multiple video feeds when you are feeling fatigued.

SWITCH TO PHONE CALLS WHEN POSSIBLE

Like texting or email it is important to remember what form of communication is most effective for each situation. Video calls can feel invasive or excessive when a simple phone call will suffice. Ask the person if they would prefer a phone call. Ask yourself if video is needed to accomplish this task. Phone calls are also helpful for peer support and 1:1 conversation. Employees report missing 1:1 office banter which can be minimal during remote work.

MAKE TIME FOR SMALL TALK

A sure way to make virtual meetings more enjoyable is to take time to check in with others. Initiate a check-in by asking others how they are doing. A "good news" report is a great way to celebrate personal victories. **If you are struggling and remote work has caused you to feel disconnected, now may be the time to see a counselor.**

Source: Harvard Business Journal

Telephone counseling is now available through your Employee Assistance Plan
To schedule private and confidential counseling sessions:



1 800 342 5653



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