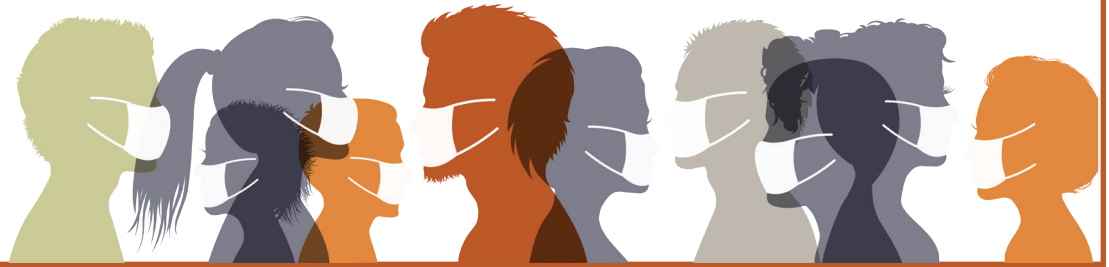


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10 TIPS



10 Tips for Dealing with the Stress of a Furlough

Handling the stress of the COVID-19 pandemic has probably been difficult in the first place. Adding a temporary furlough to the mix can compound the anxiety, fear, and frustration an employee is already feeling. It will be a difficult time for many people, but the following tips can help alleviate some of the challenges this situation presents.

- 1. Recognize that your emotions may be heightened.** You have already been dealing with the uncertainty about how to handle the current health crisis, and now things have moved into the career realm. Your sad may become sadder. Your frustration may become irritability. Be aware of your reactions to ordinary events and use your toolkit of coping mechanisms to handle them.
- 2. Develop a personal wellness toolkit for managing stress and anxiety, and any other negative emotions that may come up throughout your day.** Your toolkit should contain a way to re-focus negative thoughts and worries into more positive thinking. Spend more time with constructive and productive views of your situation and utilize your creativity to formulate new opinions of your current dilemma. Your toolkit could include:
 - Daily exercise
 - A healthy food plan
 - Guided breathing exercises
 - Meditation
 - Periodic breaks for leisure activities
 - Scheduled phone call or FaceTime with a friend
 - A set schedule to follow—routine helps us thrive
 - Room for spontaneity within your schedule
- 3. Express your feelings in a productive way.** Share them with family, close friends, a Ulliance EAP counselor. Left unchecked, negative emotions can lead to ineffective behavior or poor and reactive decision making.

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- 4. Look at your finances realistically and take proper steps to maintain the capability of paying your bills.** Make a list of all your expenditures and compare it to your current income. Look for ways to make changes and reduce expenditures where you can. There is information on budgeting and how to make this a regular monthly habit. It is also recommended you tackle this project as a family. Remember to call Ulliance for information on how to build an effective budget.
- 5. Practice patience and kindness – with and towards yourself, and towards others.** As a result of your current situation, you may be dealing with institutions and processes that are unfamiliar to you. Try to see these as opportunities rather than obstacles. Remember that it's not the challenges we face but how we respond to them that ultimately determines our outlook.
- 6. Now that you have some unexpected time on your hands, it might be a good opportunity to assess your values and interests on a personal level.** When you have extra time, are you using that time doing things that you used to say you would do "if you had time"? You can look at this as an opportunity to reset your life and inspire yourself to focus on self-care as well as caring for others.
- 7. Maintain open communication with your company's human resource department, per their direction.** Keep up on current developments with the workplace and how they are weathering this difficult period.
- 8. Maintain connection with other furloughed co-workers.** Become each other's support system, but not each other's complaint department. Back each other's attempts to weather this storm in a productive and healthy manner. Develop new strategies and activities to stay motivated, healthy and live your life with the confidence you will be okay.
- 9. When you connect with others, remember to practice good social distancing – consider phone calls, FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, text messaging, etc., rather than in-person meetups.** If you are around others, be advised that current CDC guidelines recommend that individuals stay at least 6 feet apart from another and wear face coverings.
- 10. Remember that you are not alone!** Even if your support network is temporarily diminished as a result of furlough and COVID-19, if an EAP is not available through your company *there are several resources available in your community such as Michigan statewide hotline for Michiganders whose mental health has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis call 888.733.7753*

When you partner with Ulliance, our Life Advisor Consultants are always just a phone call away to teach ways to enhance your work-life balance and increase your happiness. The Ulliance Life Advisor Employee Assistance Program can help employees and employers come closer to a state of total well-being.