

Moving Forward to a New Normal

Coping with the aftermath of a crisis can take time. As much as we all want to move forward with optimism, the realities of the pandemic and our awareness of societal inequalities have altered our perceptions of the world and perhaps of ourselves. How we move forward and re-engage will have a lot to do with our personal game plan. The following strategies can assist you in your journey to the “next normal.”

1. Have the right mindset.

Those who thrive through change and achieve their goals generally believe that they can improve and grow as people. Explore opportunities to change the way that you work and engage with family, friends, and your community. Recognize that fear is a part of uncertainty but fortitude amidst challenges drives change.

2. Do not give into negativity.

Be relentless in attacking self-criticism. Thoughts such as “I’ll never be able to do this” or “People just don’t understand me” encourage self-doubt. They encourage us to retreat to old ways of doing things. Practice self-compassion by replacing critical thoughts with empowering statements such as “I’ve got this” or “I’ve been successful in learning new skills in the past, and I’ll be successful in learning new skills now.” Or, “I’ve created positive relations with team members in the past and I expect to do so again.”

3. Write your story.

Start typing, writing, or recording the story of who you want to be a year from now and five years from now and so on. Read your story aloud. Stories appeal immediately to the part of our brain that is hard-wired to receive their message. This network tends to lead to inspiration. Invite close friends or a mentor to contribute to your story. You may be pleasantly surprised by their assessments of your strengths.

4. Recognize when you need a break.

Managing through change takes energy, hard work, and rest. Scheduling time to rest and sleep allow your muscles, nerves, bones, and connective tissue time to rebuild. While we tend to put rest at the end of our to-do lists, it requires being at the top of our list if we expect to get up and start each day feeling rejuvenated.

5. Stay connected to the people who support your well-being.

Humans are social animals. We crave feeling supported, valued, and connected. Prioritize staying connected to family, friends, and peers who celebrate your achievements and rev you up when you need support. Share small moments and large moments. Be vulnerable to sharing tough emotions such as doubt, fear, regret, and sadness. Celebrate opportunities to share joy, awe, and hope.

6. Reach out for assistance to thrive.

Give yourself the advice that you would give to a friend when the uncertainties of life become overbearing. Do not be afraid to reach out for help. Caring family and friends can provide valuable insight as you reflect and plan. Professional life coaches can help you assess your motivation for change, identify your goals, set objectives, and get back on track after a setback. Mental health counselors can provide guidance when the challenges of change result in situational anxiety or depression. Your Carebridge EAP benefit is available 24/7 to provide free, confidential assistance by calling 800.437.0911.

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