

3 Tips for Transitions Back- Essential Partners 2021

Communicate with intention:

The pandemic has revealed many dysfunctional communication cycles that existed before the virus changed all our lives, such as the ways that parents, teachers, and administrators communicate (or fail to communicate). If we want to break those cycles as we transition to a post-pandemic life—or stop them before they have a chance to set in—we need to embrace more intentional communication norms. It's simpler than it sounds. One way to be more intentional in the way you communicate is by asking yourself, what is my purpose in this conversation? What am I learning about this different person or view? Am I speaking to be heard and understood? Is there a question I can ask to learn more about other views? The virus is not going away. Returning to work and school will certainly lead to more hard conversations later. We need to think of intentional communication as a core competency for our post-pandemic future.

Slow down and listen:

In a conflict, people often rush to act. They want to solve the problem or show that they are taking responsibility. But the best response to a crisis usually begins with listening. Making space for people to share their hopes, concerns, and experiences can help them feel heard, which opens the door to mutual trust and creative thinking. The deliberate, inclusive work of listening will set a solid foundation for collective decisions. Moving too quickly, on the other hand, could leave people feeling excluded or ignored. That alienation can fray important relationships and produce self-sustaining cycles of conflict. The antidote is simple: take time to reflect, listen, and connect before jumping into a decision.

Check out your assumptions:

The last year has changed us. It has made visible many things that used to be more difficult to see: what we value, what we can and cannot live without, old patterns of communication, workplace dynamics, and the strength of our relationships. We may be tempted to assume that nothing will change once we return, or to assume that everything will be different. These types of assumptions lead to conflict, confusion, and anxiety. If we don't articulate the changes we want—or don't want—we are much more likely to fall into dysfunctional patterns of behavior and communication.