Tips for Teleworking During the Outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019

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Schools and businesses are closing in response to the global outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019, and many people will be working from home for the first time. Knowing how to get started can be a task in itself, so here are some tips for getting mission ready and managing the challenges of telework head on.

Make a plan

- Talk to your supervisor about working from home. Make sure you understand what your supervisor expects from you, and that your supervisor understands your home situation.

- Make sure you have the equipment you need, such as a computer and internet access, and know who to call for technical support.

- If it is difficult for you to keep regular hours while teleworking due to caring for children or other family members, ask your supervisor about working a flexible schedule.

- If it isn't possible for you to do your normal work task at home, see if there is other work you could do. Your supervisor might have other tasks that you could support from home.

- Schedule times to check in with your co-workers during the work day to stay connected and avoid feeling isolated.

Create a work space and manage distractions

- Set up a designated work area, ideally away from distractions. If you don't have a room you can use as an office, move a small table into a corner and use a straight-backed chair.

- Try to avoid searching online for the latest updates on COVID-19 while working. Make your work time focused and think of it as a mental break from the news cycle.

- If you have small children, try to schedule focused work during nap times or in the evening if possible.

- If your children are older, try to find activities to keep them busy while you are working.

- If your spouse is also working from home, try to coordinate schedules so that each of you takes a turn having dedicated work hours and dedicated family hours

Be creative in developing new routines and activities

Many of the nation's school districts have closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This means a majority of children are home, without normal access to school, friends and activities. Instead of allowing children unlimited television or social media access, try some of the following alternatives:

- Organize regular calls with friends and family, taking advantage of video calling if you are able.

- Have grandparents or friends read stories to toddlers or young children via video calling.

- Provide children with access to simple, age-appropriate art supplies that don't require regular adult supervision. Search online for arts and crafts activities, easy science experiments or kids cooking ideas.

- Check out the MWR Digital Libraries for free online learning opportunities for your children of all ages.

- Challenge school-aged children to read books that their favorite movies are based on.

- Have children keep a daily journal, or write letters to friends.

- Take advantage of your social network to stay connected and share ideas for managing telework and family.

Stay up to date on COVID-19 developments

Our understanding of COVID-19 is changing rapidly. Stay up to date by checking the Coronavirus Information for Our Military Community page for updates. For updates and information specific to your location, visit your installation's official website. You can also follow your installation's Facebook, Twitter or Instagram platforms. For Department of Defense updates for the military community regarding the virus that causes COVID-19, visit Defense.gov and follow Military OneSource's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram platforms.