I have been told to come back to work...

All over the country workers who were laid off, on furlough, or working from home are coming back to the workplace. At the same time, many people have continued coming into the job. All workers will face some emotional challenges as we continue to transition to “the new normal.” Whether you are just re-entering the workplace or have been here all along you may have mixed feelings of fear, anger, guilt or frustration. Feelings are neither right or wrong, but they can motivate us to be focused and take positive actions. Below are some ideas for dealing with different emotions.

Fear is often based on “what if” or the unknown. To combat fear we should learn all we can from reliable sources and take action based on that information.

Anger can be a sign that you feel threatened or have been hurt or wronged. To combat anger look for common ground or understanding of other’s perspective. In times of stress few people are at their best and we may need to give everyone the benefit of the doubt.

Guilt may arise from feeling you let team members down or you are putting your family at risk by coming back to work. Look for how you can make your best decision now. That may mean taking on new responsibilities at work or taking extra precautions to protect your family.

Frustration is common when what you want is not possible. There are conflicting demands made on your time and energy. To reduce frustration look for your choices and options, and make decisions based on what is important to you.

Taking care of yourself mind, body and soul during a pandemic

Mind—take breaks from stressful situations, including the media. Look for reliable sources of information.

Body—Meditate, relax, breathe. Eat well, sleep well and avoid the overuse of alcohol or drugs.

Soul—Make time to connect with others and your faith, do activities that you enjoy to unwind and distract from worry.

"The greatest weapon we have against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.”

William James

Some questions to ask:

- What precautions are in place to protect workers and consumers?
- What is done if I or a coworker gets sick?
- What new policies are in place for testing and quarantine?
- How are my coworkers handling these feelings?