

Attraction & Retention

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
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Market Recap

No Consensus Among Employers About Return-to-Work Strategy

Consistency has been in short supply during the COVID-19 pandemic. Government guidance has gone back and forth on critical issues, including mask-wearing and social distancing. Individual states have made their own rules, or lack thereof, regarding COVID-19 restrictions. Even some counties within the same state have enforced conflicting obligations and timetables.

Amid all this inconsistent guidance, how can a business decide on the best way to return to in-person work? In most cases, it will come down to employers weighing factors unique to each organization. Perhaps that's why [81% of companies](#) only have tentative return-to-work dates, relying instead on hybrid work models or other arrangements, according to an Aon survey. Without definitive guidance on the

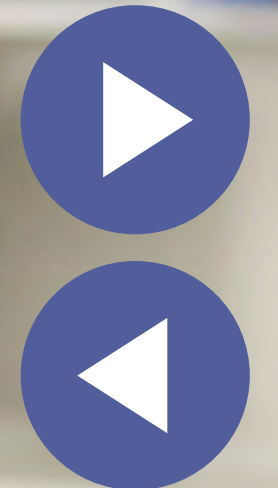
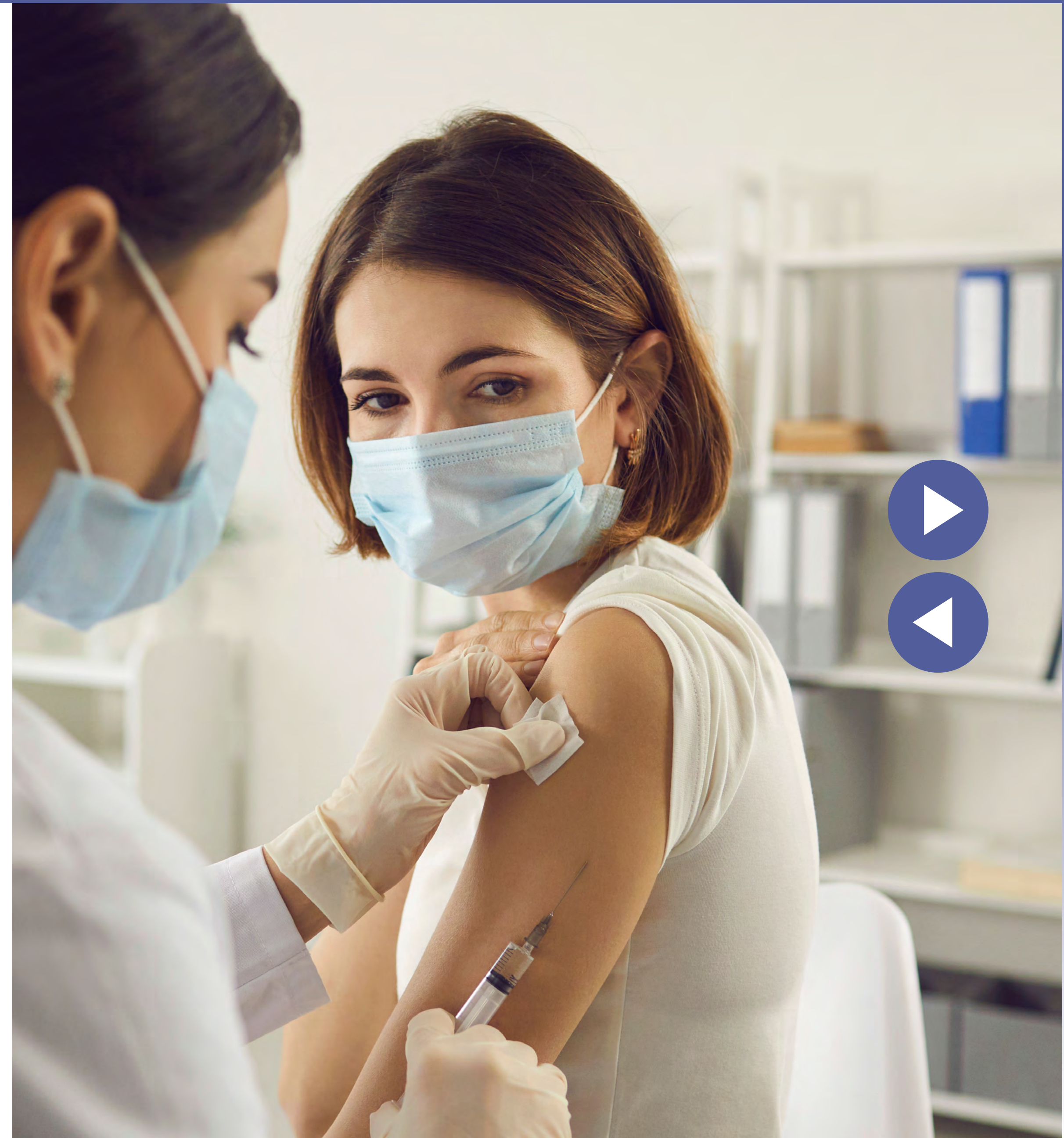
matter, employers have been left to determine their own paths forward. And that means answering a number of workplace questions, including:

- Should reopening be determined by local COVID-19 infection rates or some other metric?
- Should workers be given the option to work remotely?
- Should masks be required, even if there's no local mask mandate?
- Should work hours be adjusted to allow for more cleaning?
- Should the building capacity be reduced?
- Should employees be required to be vaccinated before working in person?

Employers wishing to return to work will need to ask themselves these and other important questions before they can safely usher employees back. In fact, employees should be given special consideration, as [many still fear a return to in-person work](#)—looking instead to continue remote arrangements. For some, the idea of returning to the status quo has [prompted them to simply quit](#), even when in well-paying positions.

That's why, as employers plan for a return to work, they should consider employee reception. Will the proposed rules [cause a pushback](#)? Is the business willing to lose some workers for the sake of maintaining certain standards? Is there a more creative approach for dealing with exigent circumstances? Having answers to these types of questions will help provide a smooth transition back to the workplace.

MARKET
RECAP



Securing Talent

3 Tips for Strategic Recruiting

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, recruiting has entered into a strange paradigm. Despite record unemployment levels, some employers are still finding it difficult to recruit talent. That's due in part to the fact that, after a year of remote work and health uncertainty, some employees want their jobs to provide more than just a paycheck.

This means employers can do more to attract and retain workers with expectations influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., those seeking wellness-related perks or to retain their remote working arrangements)—some employers are even going [above and beyond](#) in order to stand out. Put another way, employers should consider creative ways to leverage existing benefits and accommodate workers in order to increase the flow of new talent. Here are three strategies for employers to think about:

1. Tout Remote Working Capabilities

Many employees are unwilling to give up remote work after a year of getting used to it. If an organization allows remote work, it should emphasize that point during recruiting conversations. Work-

place flexibility could be more appealing than other perks to some individuals.

2. Streamline the Hiring Process

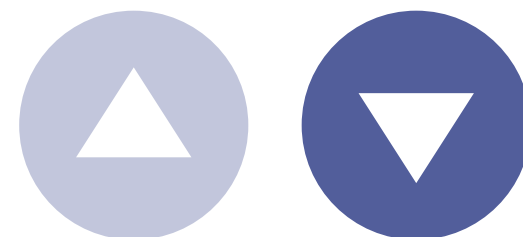
The longer it takes for candidates to hear back from a company, the greater the opportunity a more attractive offer comes and steals them away. Employers can streamline their hiring by using technology efficiencies such as virtual interviewing and text-message vetting. Employers can also consider other methods for getting individuals into positions faster, such as internal promotions and cross-training.

3. Provide Flexibility

More than ever before, employees are looking for greater workplace flexibility. Beyond fully remote work, this means the ability to adjust working hours or take time off at the last minute. For instance, an employee may seek a schedule that allows them to work in the office some days and

from home on others. Employers with bandwidth can consider allowing managers to work with employees on such arrangements to help attract individuals seeking flexibility, such as working parents.

While nonexhaustive, these strategies can help employers stand out from others during their hiring conversations. Speak with us for more attraction and retention strategies, including leveraging employee benefits.



SECURING
TALENT



Securing Talent

Improve Employee Mental Health to Ease Return to Work

Across the country, workers are dreading a return to in-person work. Nearly 60% of employees said they would “absolutely” look for a new job if they were forced to end their remote working arrangements and return to the workplace, according to a recent [FlexJobs survey](#). On top of this, anxiety and depression have nearly tripled during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the National Center for Health Statistics.

Summarily, this data indicates that employers will have their work cut out for them as employees return to the workplace. Employers will need to strategize ways to address employee concerns, ease stressors and effectively transition employees back into in-person roles. As recent surveys have indicated, ignoring employee anxieties could lead to mass departures and create even more problems.

Here are some ways employers can help support employee mental health as employees come back into the workplace:

Strategize with Managers

Managers should be trained on spotting signs of workplace stress or mental health deterioration. This can help initialize proactive conversations. Employers can also consider empowering managers with the authority to work with employees—as needed—on alternative schedules or other accommodations to ease their return to work.

Provide Mental Health Resources

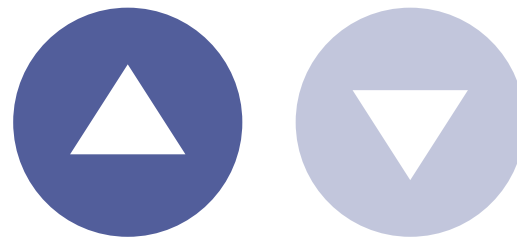
Employees may be more likely to seek professional mental health assistance if their employer provides it. Employers can consider adding mental health resources as part of their employee assistance pro-

grams. Additionally, employers can look into more creative strategies that can help reduce stressors, such as allowing more time off, catering lunches or organizing extracurricular events.

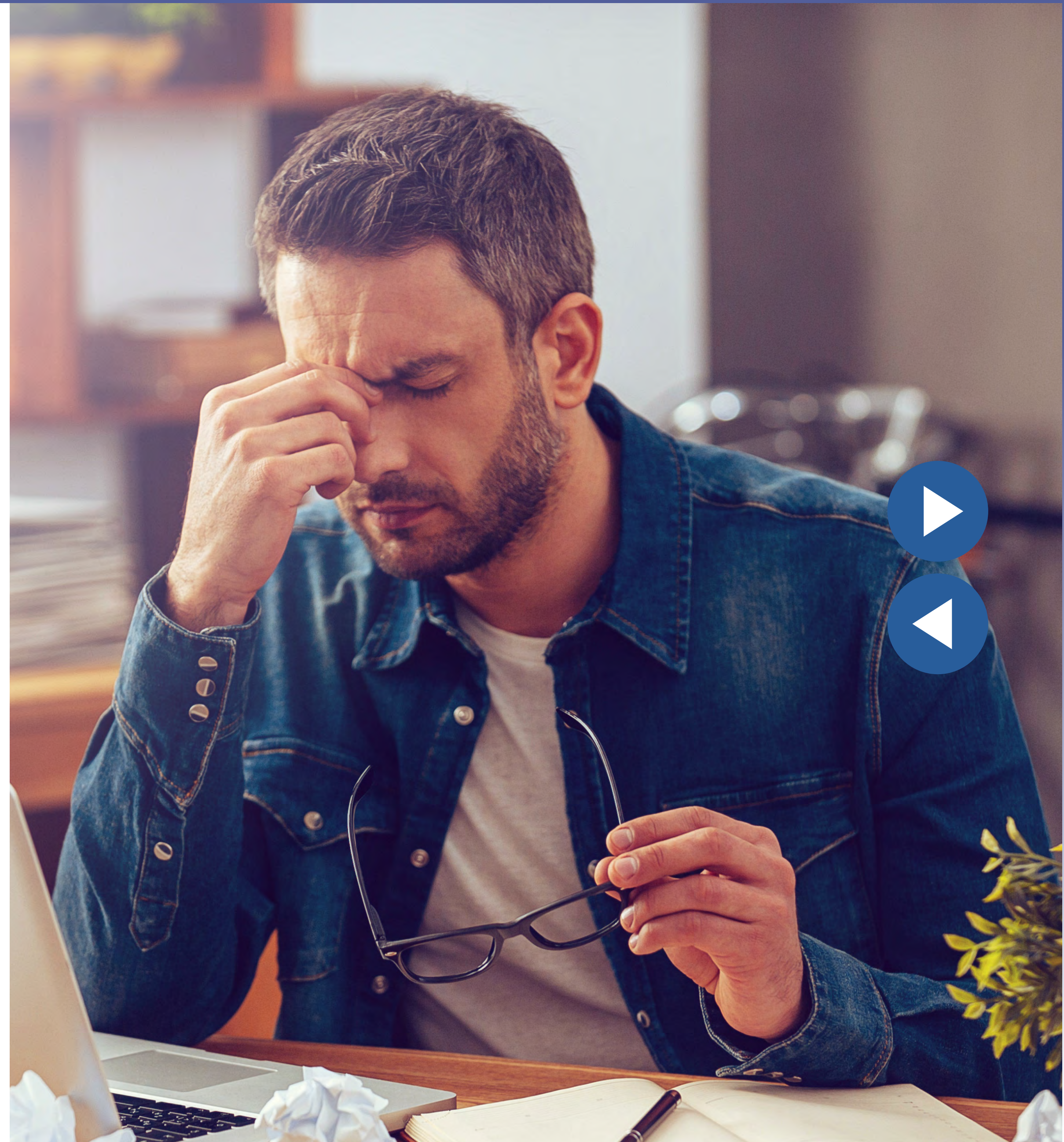
Foster a Supportive Environment

Another way to support employee mental health is to simply address it. Talking about mental health can make employees more open to discussing it, which can help preempt workplace issues. Employees should be encouraged to bring up issues that are affecting their work. However, this can only be done in a supportive environment that has resources for employees to use.

Reach out today for more ways to support employees as they transition back into the workplace.



SECURING
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Workplace Outlook

Each month, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) surveys around 149,000 businesses and government agencies and publishes the data the following month. This information offers a snapshot of the country's employment health and growth. Below is the data for May 2021, the most recent month available. Note, the BLS is now contextualizing its data with February 2020's pre-COVID-19 figures.

Unemployment rate*:



Total nonfarm** payroll employment:

**+559,000
new jobs**

(-7.6 million below Feb. 2020 level)

Primary job gains:

leisure and hospitality, public and private education, health care, and social assistance

Leisure and hospitality:

+292,000

(-2.5 million below Feb. 2020 level)

Social assistance:

+ 23,000

(-257,000 below Feb. 2020 level)

Public and private education:

+144,000

(-1.2 million below Feb. 2020 level)

Health care:

+ 23,000

(-508,000 below Feb. 2020 level)

*The BLS does not count furloughed individuals as "unemployed," figuring they will return to work eventually. However, that may not be a reality for many, which may affect this statistic.

**Nonfarm: goods, construction and manufacturing companies in the United States. The data excludes farm workers, private employees and nonprofit organizations.

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

**WORKPLACE
OUTLOOK**

