



## How to use the Guided Conversation & Tips Sheet for Working From Home

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This download includes two parts:

- 1) Guided Group Conversation (for facilitators)
- 2) Tips Sheet (for all participants, to be shared after a the group discussion)

The Guided Group Conversation is meant for a meeting facilitator to use (not meant to be shared widely). The framing statements provide context for the respective Time, Space, and Community topics. We included a few options for discussion questions in each section because we're never sure what will resonate most with each team. Please feel free to use the one that feels most relevant. We also included a couple facilitator examples in case the group is finding the question confusing or the discussion is lagging, but my guess is you won't need them.

The tips we've collected after lots of reflection and research. What's most important is that individuals develop an infrastructure that works for them and in truth, this is not a time when one size fits all tips/tricks will really work (each home situation is so different and has intersectional challenges). Instead, we developed the Time/Space/Community paradigm to help guide the process of building your individual Work From Home (WFH) infrastructure.

We strongly recommend that rather than reading through these tips as a group, you use any time together to start a conversation about how the timing, space and community of your work has changed and what the impact of that has been. After the conversation and reflection has started, share the Tips Sheet as continued reading and some possible action items.



## Guided Group Conversation for Working From Home

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### **TIME**

**Framing:** The timing of our lives and work has changed a lot. In many ways we have more to do and in other ways we have less. As individuals and an organization, we have to develop a new timing infrastructure that works for the unique needs of now and is adaptable to whatever our work/life looks like today, in 6 months, and 2 years.

#### **Discussion Qs:**

- What do you have to spend time on now that you didn't in the past? (Facilitator example: distance learning, caring for family, coping with sickness)
- What do you no longer have to spend time on? (Facilitator example: commute, in person meetings)
- How has your work time changed? Specifically, are you spending more/less time trying to communicate between departments? or having meetings? or working independently?

### **SPACE**

**Framing:** Our spaces have collided, our homes have become a place for everything- work, school, relaxation, recreation, etc. We are no longer able to keep our work and personal lives separate as we are literally getting. Peek into coworkers' home lives. Many of us are facing either much more isolation, or a complete loss of individual space.

#### **Discussion Qs:**

- What ways did you "enter & exit" your work in the past? What ways do you do it now?
- What distractions are around you (consider all your senses)?
- Who else is in your space as you WFH?

### **COMMUNITY**

**Framing:** With the loss of shared work spaces, our professional communities have changed. We have lost many of our opportunities for casual social interaction and informal gathering. Many of our professional relationships/dynamics have changed because our expectations, boundaries and actual work has shifted.

#### **Discussion Qs:**

- What was your favorite part of the office/on-campus community? (Facilitator example: getting coffee with my office mate, happy hour, students on campus, etc.)
- Are you talking to certain coworkers/staff more or less than before?
- What office/on-campus events have been missed or changed? (Facilitator example: celebrations, lectures, etc.)



# Tips for Developing a Work From Home Infrastructure

## Time

1. Acknowledge the loss of transition time in your day. Intentionally add those times back to your WFH day. That may look like:
  - Going for a walk/ride/drive and listening to a podcast either before beginning or after finishing work.
  - Drinking a cup of coffee on the porch.
  - Taking 15 deep breaths in and out while your children scream in the background.
  - Find whatever works for you, it doesn't have to be anything fancy or even something that takes a lot of time- just something you can commit to doing each day. Give your brain and body queues to transition in and out of work time.
2. Utilize timing tools such as [The Pomodoro Method](#), [Important/Urgent Matrix](#), or [The GTD Method](#) to help you bring temporal structure to your work day.
3. Schedule and respect time to take breaks from work (go eat lunch in another space without any work), and look away from the computer screen (give your eyes a break by looking at something across the room -- every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away, for 20 seconds).

## Space

1. Your new workspace may require different tools to be successful, don't be afraid to invest a little. Pay particular attention to the way your new work space impacts your senses. This may look like:
  - Noise cancelling headphones, ear plugs, speakers
  - Room divider, curtain, door locks
  - Plants, fans, air fresheners
  - Bulletin board, chalk board, white board, draw dividers, desk organizers
2. Create "entering and exiting" rituals for your workspace. That may look like:
  - Closing you work laptop and putting in on a shelf/in another room/away.
  - Closing the door to your office, curtains on a window, folding the chair you use and putting it aside.
  - Ritualizing these small gestures will help create boundaries between your work space and life space (even if they are the same kitchen table)
3. Move around! If at all possible establish two solid working spaces in your home. They do not have to be very formal, it can be a couch and desk but think about them and use them with intention throughout the day. Create structure around each space and why/how you use them (for example desk for conference calls and couch for individual work time). If you're starting to feel sluggish, or hit that afternoon lull, change-up which room you're working in, or maybe look out a different window or face a different wall to get a change of scenery and a mental refresh

## Community

1. Intentionally create time/space for casual community socializing.
  - If you miss the lunchroom or water cooler, make a plan to go for a walk and talk on the phone with your favorite colleague
  - If you are leading virtual meetings, begin them with a brief prompt for casual socializing. For example high/hopes, funny quarantine stories, weekly wins/losses.
  - Create informal community work sessions where people do individual work on a video call together. Using a timing tool such as The Pomodoro Method (see above) helps organize the time and creates a structure for both work and breaks.
2. We know that seeing people in person is a different experience. Consider a safe/socially distant one-on-one with your supervisor or favorite colleague, but only if both parties feel safe/comfortable doing so.
3. Acknowledge life events of your colleagues via (safe) intentional gathering whether a virtual party or socially distanced picnic lunch.
4. In general, but especially if you are in a leadership position, be checking in with your team beyond work and task management. Intentional and regular wellness checks should be conducted and lines of communication should be reinforced with action- reach out, call/text/email. People may not share struggles, unless they are asked (or until a space opens for sharing and feedback)- do not just assume people are fine because you haven't heard from them.