Conflict During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home restrictions have been challenging for many people, with significant disruptions to daily life. As people begin returning to work and other daily activities, conflicts may arise, and some people may have strong opinions about government-mandated restrictions and other limitations on a "return to normal."

During this time of transition, you may find that you are:

▶ Talking more about events in the news or viral social media videos

▶ Avoiding or feeling tense around people with differing points of view about COVID-19 related restrictions on activities or the vaccine

▶ Feeling anxious about risks related to returning to work or spending time with people who have differing views on wearing masks or social distancing

If you are struggling to avoid conflict with others about these difficult topics, especially in the workplace, keep these guidelines in mind:

▶ **Follow company policy and safety guidelines.** Most companies have procedures for wearing masks, social distancing, and cleaning the workplace. Adhere to these policies at all times while you are at work.

▶ **Respect personal choices.** Some people may feel it's important to follow masking and social distancing guidelines and get the vaccine, while others may feel it is unnecessary. If someone in your workplace chooses to wear a mask and maintain social distancing out of concern for their own or a loved one's health, respectfully accommodate their preference.

▶ **Avoid arguments at work.** If you disagree with someone else's views, change the subject or politely withdraw from the conversation. If someone is persistent, say, "I don't feel comfortable talking about this subject at work."

▶ **Remain neutral with customers.** Some customers may disagree with company policies or dislike rules about wearing masks or social distancing. Follow the guidelines created by your employer and keep your personal opinions out of any exchanges. If a vendor or customer is refusing to comply with requirements for entering your workplace, ask your supervisor or manager for guidance.

▶ **Practice good self-care.** If the potential for conflict at work or in other public places is stressful, take time to regroup. Practice good self-care by eating healthy, exercising, and aiming for seven to nine hours of sleep per night. Follow your local health department and the CDC's recommendations for avoiding infection during the pandemic.

LifeMatters can help you cope with stress related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Call 24/7/365.