# WR3 Challenges of Working Remotely

This is video three of the working remotely be connected module. In this video we're looking at the challenges of working remotely.

So welcome back to the videos. We left at the last video that you were going to write down your top challenges that you're facing around remote working. So some of the more frequent challenges that come up, are a loss of your daily routines. And when when we do these events live, and people are doing this, some of the things that come up in these events and also in the research that has been published more frequent challenges that people report are:

Loss of daily routines, loss of the physical connection and presence, a sense that change is coming fast and unpredictably which feels threatening, uncertainty, disorientation, stress, and loneliness and isolation.

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So how many of those resonated with the challenges that you captured. And here are some of the more detailed challenges that people have reported in in some of our events. So isolation is a very very, and loneliness, social isolation and loneliness is a very common complaint because people miss the social interactions at the office. We're not only there working. We spend an awful lot of our lives in the office and so the connections and interactions that we have with our colleagues are really important part of being at work. And losing that sense of connection with your colleagues leads to feeling a bit less like you belong to the organisation or your team. And some people feel that, without that daily sort of face to face interaction with your manager, some people feel well actually, they're not there, they've not got my back, that I don't have their support. And on the other side managers quite often worry about ‘well how can I manage someone properly when I don't get to see them?’ So it takes a little bit of learning and the shift in your mindset as to how you how you manage your relationship like that in the workplace. So frequently it’s lacking that social interaction with your colleagues and feeling less sense of being part of the

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team and it's not really easy to see what others are doing when you're not in the office together and much more difficult to collaborate with just walk over to somebody's desk when you've got a query. It's difficult to maintain that social connection with your colleagues and losing the structure and the routine of the office and the fact that when you're in the office, your whole environment around you is reinforcing that sense of I'm in the office. And as part of the routine of going to the office is that commute from where you are at home, the time that you're going to the office, part of that routine is getting you out of home mindset into office mindset. So this is one of the things we're going to be talking about.

A lack of access to information is another really key challenge people talk about, and one of them is it just takes so much longer. You've got a simple question but you can't just wander over to someone and say hey can I just ask you quickly. Maybe you phone them, maybe you send them an email. It takes time to get the email back. This is moving into a way of working, what they call asynchronously, so we are not working at the same time, and we need to shift how we plan and the way that we work so that it doesn't feel like a barrier and frustration. And because of the less social connection, some people talk about when you're feeling out of the loop of information the social and group information, as well as bits of work.

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Communication is more complicated. So for many people, it's been a very rapid learning curve, how do we learn the new IT. So things like video conferencing tools like Zoom or Teams, maybe Adobe Connect, all of that. Some of them are similar, but you need to know how to use it. So that's learning.

Maybe you don't have the right equipment or your computer's a bit too old to work with the latest version, and maybe at home your broadband isn't quite as fast as what you have in the office, it can be quite frustrating. And finding a quiet space for work, especially when you're on these video conferencing and you've got lots of distractions and people wanting to come into the same space. All of these can be challenges and we need to start thinking about how do we create the space that's really going to work.

A lot of people talk about screen fatigue. We've got lots of meetings and for whatever reason, it's actually much more exhausting being in a meeting where we're seeing each other on video, and much more tiring than if we were physically all in the same room. And it's difficult to get enough breaks between our meeting sometimes.

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And the background noises that goes with not having the right open space, or people disrupting you. For some reason, microphones seem to pick up background noises for other people and the way the programmes work, it doesn't distinguish a background noise so it can be hard to hear the person who's really speaking, rather than just background noise happening on somebody else's screen. So that's why it's important that if you're not the actual speaker in the meeting that you would mute your microphone so that it's less disruptive to the meeting itself.

And then there's all the distractions. When you're at home you're in your home mindset. There's also the expectations, both of yourself and the people around you. Their expectations of how you interact with them because normally you're in home mindset and you're doing home things with them.

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So there needs to be a way of managing expectations from them and yourself. It's the emotional and mental exhaustion, is a distraction and it drains your energy and it's hard to maintain concentration. And you've just got multiple competing demands for your time and attention, as well as potentially anxiety about uncertainty when you've got all these rapid changes.

So that was some of the challenges in rather more detail. So the first thing that we need to work on today is around what we're going to do. Some practical tips, so that you can give yourself the structure to focus on your work and avoid all these distractions and the challenges that we have noticed. And the first thing that we'll be looking at in creating a structure is actually looking at your physical space to create a structure that is going to work really well for you. And at this point I'd like to invite you to think about what are the things that you're already doing at the moment to make your home environment work well for you and to reduce the distractions and make it easy for you to focus in much the same way as it does when you are in your workplace. And when you're not used to working at home you need something to shift you into a work mindset instead of your home mindset.

So let's start by… We'll stop the video just now. And if you work in the worksheet to capture some of the things that you're already doing. And then we'll start on the next video, we'll be going fully into how do you create space to give you the structure and mindset to make it easier for you to work at home.