



Anne Browning

### To the UW Medicine Community,

I am learning to be around people again. I have spent a year masked up, jumping off of curbs into the street and bounding off trails to avoid coming within anything close to six feet of anyone. Now, the traffic has returned and the noise of construction has taken up the space of the silence that I walked through a year ago under pandemic lockdowns.

Learning how to be in the world is going to take some time.

It will take time to trust the vaccine. To slowly emerge from the small circle I have lived in.

I find it a bit hard to let go of the precautions that kept us safe(r) in the face of a pandemic. While I see some friends elated to gather in groups, I find myself wondering “Are we ready for this?”, as I have during other re-openings. Only this time, I also have to ask myself, “Am I ready for this?” We are about to sunset our phased openings at the end of June. Though vaccination rates and cases are all moving in the right direction, we would like to see both numbers improve more quickly.

As I reflect on the year behind us and look at the summer ahead, I realize I am not yet ready to step back into the “normal” rhythms of summer: travel, dinner parties, neighborhood hangouts, concerts, parades – any of the summer festivities I would take as a given in other years.

I realize that I need to rest, to recover, and reconnect slowly with the world outside my tiny bubble.

#### Am I ready for the "rhythms of summer"?

- Travel
- Dinner parties
- Neighborhood hangouts
- Concerts
- Parades
- Other summer festivities

*Tip: Be gentle with yourself, family members, and friends. Some people will need more time to adjust.*

Before you pack your summers to their usual brim with activities, think about what you personally need to start recovering and entering into ways of being in the world that make sense to you. While many people are ready to toss their masks, please be gentle with family members, friends and yourself as many of us will need some time to learn how to wade into this new world.

Over the next several weeks, our University and UW Medicine will be sharing information on returning to the workplace for people who have been working remotely and evolving ways in which we work for people who are onsite. Depending on who and where you are,

these changes can be exciting, anxiety-provoking, and even a bit jarring based on the routines we have formed. Transitions are inherently challenging, and these next ones will be no different, even if they come with a long-awaited pivot towards recovering from the pandemic.

There is so much to look forward to – travel, gatherings, festivities, reconnection...

Give yourselves and the people around you the time needed to travel to that reality we have been looking forward to for so long. We have been through so much together as a community, I look forward to traveling down this long path towards thriving together over the next year as well.

With deep gratitude,

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