



# The Third Space



acacia EAP  
employee assistance program

Have you ever arrived home after a day of work and found yourself pondering just what exactly it was that you achieved? Meetings were held, conversations were had, action items developed, and perhaps some tasks were even scratched off the to-do list.

But when you find yourself in a moment of silence, all you seem to recall are a few faces, maybe some changes in location, memorable sounds, or lingering emotions from the day that was.

The transition between work life and home life is something that does not always come naturally to people. It can leave us with an endless domino effect, with each transition carrying over and impacting upon the next.

So how can we create a break in this cycle? Well, just like dominos, it is the space in between each one that determines whether or not it will impact the other.

## What is the Third Space?

Our work life is often called the first space and our home life is called the second space. The time that sits between these is referred to as The Third Space.

The Third Space is not always something that is physical, but more a conscious moment where you choose to focus your attention towards transitioning between the now (first space) and what you are about to do (second space).

Think of the Third Space as a passageway between the First and Second. It's a time when you can leave behind what has impacted upon you, and consciously choose how you will move forward into what you are going to do. How you choose to transition between these two spaces will determine how you show up in the next.

## Purpose of the Third Space

At work, we may need to be intense, efficient, and result-driven, generating emotions of stress and anxiety. But carrying this energy into the home could have a considerable impact, not only on ourselves but also on those around us. Effective use of the Third Space, however, allows us to enter the home or the office with the mindset and the energy that we desire.

## Implement the Third Space

There are three core steps to making the most out of the Third Space. These steps can be uniquely structured to fit in with an individual's life.

## Reflect

When reflecting back upon the day, we as humans tend to focus on all the things that went wrong or where we fell short. But in order to get the most out of the Third Space, we need to generate thoughts that are of a more positive nature. This can be done by asking ourselves questions similar to the following:

- What did I appreciate about today?
- What did I accomplish today?
- What did I learn from my experiences?

## Rest

Use this step to take the time to slow down the racing mind before moving straight into the next stage. Acknowledging our varying lives, this will look different from one person to the next.

Perhaps it's a few deep breaths, a crossword on the bus, a podcast or playlist in the car, or getting off a stop early and enjoying your surroundings. Whatever it is, the important part is that it has given us a small moment to unwind and rest between our work and our home.

## Reset

Resetting is like clearing the whiteboard of all the things that you had set for the previous space and then writing down what you want to focus on for the next.

How is it that you want to enter that door, whether it be the door to your home or the door to your office? What kind of energy do you want to bring into the space? What behaviours or actions will align you with these goals?

## Getting Support

We understand that navigating strategies that support mental health and wellbeing can be challenging, and that each individual's experience is personal and unique.

To further support your wellbeing journey, and explore other strategies that may be of benefit, we encourage you to connect with one of our EAP Professionals. A reminder that EAP assistance is not just for those with a 'problem', but also those looking to go from 'good-to-great'.

