



Personal Tool

Self-trust and hope for the future

This tool was created by one of our senior clinical team members from our Melbourne Office, Kate McPhee, Psychologist & Clinical Associate Coordinator at AccessEAP.

Summing up 2020 in one word would probably be: cancelled. In a year of social distancing you would be forgiven for thinking that you have no idea of what is going on in different suburbs, states or countries. All humans need to trust that other humans are doing the right thing, trust in the hospital system to hold and trust in themselves that we are all strong enough to get through this.

Trust is a really big word with only five letters. Brene Brown's approach to trust is to break it down into small and palatable spoonful's to easily digest the current situation. In our communication, we have developed our own acronym to allow us to think and give a language on how to think in times of crisis. The clear message today, similar to many other personal tools this year, is that we need to find some strategies to trust ourselves and those around this and hope for the future. Of course, it is hard to remain optimistic during extended strict physical distancing requirements and when the recession deepens, and there is no end in sight.

Although there is no one size fits all strategy but those of us who are overwhelmed, worried about the future and/or unable to make any long-term plans to cope should take heart that this is a normal response to 2020.

However, the midst of a pandemic, it can feel rather difficult to trust that our neighbours, friends and family are appropriately socially distanced, wearing masks on public transport and hand sanitising at all times. The best we can do is trust ourselves and develop our level of self-trust.

What does it mean to trust ourselves and develop self-trust? The short answer is reflecting on what it is that you need, desire? want or wish for. The longer and much harder answer is around self-awareness and staying in touch with your approaches to your world view, relationships, plans and goals. Listening to your own reactions and self-talk can give you a big clue as what areas are a strength for you. Spend time alone to enhance self-care, positive reward time. Give yourself simple pleasures daily.

Similarly to that of Brene Brown, we have adapted **HONOUR**, to give a framework to adapt. **HONOUR** by its very definition is the quality of knowing and doing what is morally right. This means that we have to trust and hope that our friends, families and colleagues are doing what we have been asked to do.



H O N O U R

Hope. Choosing hope will allow us to be tolerant, plan for the future and be kinder to those around us. Find a way to appreciate your sense of self and keep the faith in your choices and focus on what you believe in is right. Trust is also about knowing that there are some incredible brains in the medical world, and given some time there will be a vaccine that each and every one of us can have.

Openness to the idea that we can only control our end of the socially distancing, masking and sanitising. Looking at and understanding and even celebrating how you are different than others.

Non-judgemental when people around us make mistakes, choose different options and approaches to dealing with a new post-COVID-19 normal. Don't give up when things go wrong. Make a commitment to the relationship you have with yourself. Learn from mistakes, and really was it a mistake? Clinicians call it growth. In order to trust others, it is important to be trustworthy yourself. Be kind in this self-reflection but remember that being honest is a big part of trust.

Outlook. What kind of life do you want to lead? If your worldview has been shaken or obliterated due to COVID-19, look at strengths and values to realign and reset goals to pivot them to the new world. Redesigning our dreams and hopes does not mean that we have buried them for good. It means that we look for a perspective shift in finding meaning, purpose and goals in what will be a different world.

Understand. Listen to understand and speak to be understood. Take some time to reflect on your process of understanding. Do you rush to understand and make assumptions along the way? Work out problems and develop solutions that make sense to you. Ask questions and slow down your thinking process which will allow for more understanding, deeper knowledge gathering and (hopefully) more trust in the way you do things.

Reliance. Many, if not all humans, prefer to see the world as a safe place. In 2020 it would be fair to say that this has not been a year of certainty or even safe. Building self-trust is about replacing (or in some cases starting from scratch and laying out) the foundations that we had and create new ways to keep thriving in 2021.

In conclusion, spend some time over the next couple of days exploring how you think you feel you are going when it comes to self-trust? Which part of the HONOUR are you doing well? Which one needs to be worked on? After reading this very short piece on self-trust perhaps take one step towards trusting yourself. If everything in 2020 has been cancelled perhaps the one good outcome is that the building of self-trust. For a confidential conversation with one of our experienced clinical professionals, please contact **AccessEAP** on **1800 818 728**.

