

Leader Tool- Supporting yourself to support your people

As leaders, we consciously take on board the responsibility for others. We feel responsible for their happiness, their satisfaction, their safety and their commitments. By extension, many of us recognise that we shoulder the broader responsibilities of their families and loved ones. Our sense of duty and responsibility for caring and supporting others is a defining characteristic of good leadership. We think of our people, our teams and our organisation quite often more than we think about ourselves and our own needs. We know from conversations with many leaders through COVID-19 just how much you give to your people and teams. We want you to believe us when we say “you’re doing a great job and the best that you can do!”

We understand that for many of you, the constant protection and support you give to your people can drain your energy levels, your battery of resilience. It’s tough to feel the responsibility that we must keep on giving more to our people as they deserve and need our support when we feel exhausted and worn thin. For many of us, we do not have control over the situation, and this contributes to feelings of helplessness. We want to help but may not be able to give the support people need.

We wanted to give you some strategies and tools where you do have control to help you, help yourself, and your people.

Self-care - even in the most challenging times of our lives, and perhaps more importantly, *because* we are in these challenging times, we must be rigorous in making sure we have the energy for us to keep going ourselves. That means making some efforts to save a little bit of what you are giving to your people to give to yourself. Remember, you can’t look after your people if you burn out. At the end of each day or perhaps prior to going to bed, take a moment to think of the positive impact you had on your people. Write down a list of a few of the things that you did that helped someone. Be kind to yourself and top up your batteries a little bit for the next day. Perhaps read our personal tool to get some concrete ideas.

Self-support - while it can feel that we are on a rollercoaster that simply doesn’t end, find a way to settle in for the ride. Whilst in the pandemic, we often rush in to help support our people. We also still need to focus on meeting our own needs. While you may feel that you can’t find the time, or don’t have enough energy after a challenging day, it is important to support yourself. Listen to one of your favourite songs. Make some time for yourself at the beginning of the day. Do some planning around the tasks that you want to do that day. Do them first. Do a small gesture for a family member or friend. Do something charitable for a stranger. These things will release positive hormones in your body that will actually help lower your stress and anxiety.



Reframe perspectives - for those of us who are either in heightened physical distancing or supporting our people through these restrictions; it's important to make sure that we consciously stop and breathe. Create moments in the day where you force yourself to pause, think and reflect. It's easy when we feel we are 'in the trenches', to lose perspective and feel that we are stuck in the muck, rolling up our sleeves and standing alongside our people to help our organisation survive through the pandemic. However, our job as leaders is to help our people feel that we are leading them and the organisation into the future. Think of vulnerable leadership as a blueprint for moving through the pandemic.

Manager support - as leaders, we are often not very good at asking for help for ourselves. If you are struggling with work – ask a confidant or a trusted colleague for assistance. This will model the desired behaviours to your staff. Our Manager Support Hotline will connect you with one of our experienced professionals so that you can have a conversation about your challenges. These conversations can be a straightforward way for you to invest in your self-care, support yourself as you lead your people, better support your people through challenging times and find the time and space to create a fresh perspective for you to think and feel more clearly.

We are here to support you so that you can better support your people. If you have any further questions or would like to discuss a specific concern contact our Manager Support Hotline or your Relationship Manager. As always, as your EAP we are here to support your people whatever the nature of their concerns, please contact **AccessEAP** on **1800 818 728**.

