

## *Personal tool - Fostering hope through COVID-19*

The changes that we have seen in human behaviour over the last six months in 2020 should give us hope for the future. The reason that we should be hopeful is that so many of us have shown tremendous strength, courage and adaptability when faced with a challenge that is yet to be brought under control. Change is inevitable, and for many humans we actively avoid it to keep a sense of control around how we live, work and love. But as all of us adapt to the “new normal”, it looks very different to how it did in March. The challenges are still very real, and in some places, the numbers are still very high, but courage and commitment appear to be widespread within the community. Just take a second to imagine what is still possible after achieving so much behavioural change within 2020 (and remember, it is not over yet).

Of course the future is still uncertain, and the virus is still out there and our life has not returned to normal. Many people are still working remotely and are separated from family and friends and we are unable to embrace our elderly family members. Yet many people report that they are “managing”, “doing ok” and finding a rhythm in a life that would create frustration, boredom and disengagement if it emerged from another source. So livelihoods and businesses (including ours) have pivoted to platforms that were once unable to be accessed and many are starting to see success – completely different to what they imagined. We are distanced but only physically. The positives to physical distancing were surprising as many workplaces went virtual (either for some or all staff) and during video meetings colleagues got to see pets, family members, artwork and skills that had never been seen before. Many clients reported that they had felt that their employer experienced them as a whole person, rather than just a role. Another positive to come out of COVID-19 was that healthcare workers, our brother and sisters in arms, have had their work recognised and valued by the community. Similarly, educators and mental health professions and other essential industries, often dismissed by funding bodies previously as a luxury, have been deemed important and vital. This will have positive impacts for decades to come.

If you are taking a moment to reflect after you finish your work for the day – as a worker in whatever industry you are employed in – have hope. A human at this very second is working on a vaccine so that other humans around them can hug their Mum or travel to see their brother. Another is walking down the street and delivering a meal to a neighbour who is in a tight spot. Hope means seeking out those humans who are saying “keep going” and show creative ways to cope. Hope also means adopting a can-do attitude around finding resources, activities and assistance to move us along. So after reading this fire up your hope and take that virtual class that you have never had time to do, put on your exercise gear and actually walk/run/get active or say hello to your friend on a new video platform. Remembering that change has been enormous during the hard times could help many of us to imagine what it is going to be like when it is comfortable again.

Remember, as your EAP, we are here to support you whatever the nature of your concerns. For a confidential conversation with one of our experienced clinical professionals, please contact **AccessEAP** on **1800 818 728**.

