

Leader Tool – Exploring diversity through the pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has certainly created a diverse range of new experiences for all of us. The diversity of these experiences, and our individual and collective responses to these, have created a new paradigm of diversity opportunities for organisations. As leaders, we are expected to be able to find, create, cultivate or add value to our people, teams and organisations. Inclusion takes on a new meaning when many of our people have had their workspaces, and ways of working, fundamentally transformed in recent months.

Each of us is different – our humanity is simultaneously defined by our uniqueness and our desire to try and belong to groups, communities, tribes and organisations. The diversity of our human experiences give us opportunities to learn and understand those around us. We all experience things differently, but our power is in connecting with others through empathy, compassion, understanding and altruism. Are these traits and behaviours reflected in your people? Your teams? Your organisations?

Here are some things to consider, and possibly some strategies for you to consider in how to apply the lessons learned through the pandemic to improve your people and cultures:

Democratisation – each of us has been impacted by the pandemic. *How* we have been affected, either individually, in our teams or our organisations is very different. It is important to start from a position where we do not judge what the *right* or *wrong* experience is. Comparing experiences to others or other organisations is not helpful. This is as true for your people. Remember, every person responds differently, so be mindful of how to support each individual.

Enabling behaviours – technology can be a huge enabler for individuals. It allows us to connect in different ways, and to engage in our work in more meaningful and productive ways. For those of you who have teams in different locations, it has allowed them to connect virtually. However, there's a big difference when *everyone* is on a virtual call. We quickly learn how to be better at communicating and connecting virtually when we understand the experience from someone else's perspective. Technology is being used across many industries, from schools to offices. Engage in a conversation with your people to identify how you can enable them to be their best in their work.

Shared experiences – in the new normal, our workspaces, and how we do our work are transforming faster than ever. We are finding ourselves as leaders, and our leadership styles are often what can be best described as pragmatic. Our people are also doing the best they can. Think about how you can take the shared experiences, the joys and the pains, to bring your people and teams closer together, building on the foundation of trust to grow through and beyond the pandemic.



Conversations – there is a power in conversation, something that speaks deeply to us. We generally want to have a chat with others, whether we are introverted or extroverted, be it with friends, family or strangers. Following on from R U OK? Day, continue to encourage conversations and connections between your people and teams. Now more than ever, help your people support each other.

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**.

