

Supporting your wellbeing through the pandemic

It is a very normal thing for any of us to want to feel like we are in control of our lives. Many of us have made choices to get to where we find ourselves in life. Education, jobs, careers, partners and families are all decisions we have (mostly consciously) made in our lives. It is a very human and normal reaction to want to feel that we are in control of the choices in our lives. One of the biggest challenges COVID-19 presents us with is that it has challenged our sense of control and impacted the choices we make. Each of us is reacting differently to the pandemic; some people are seeing the positives such as more sleep, better work-life balance or saving money. For many others, our reactions are stressful, as we can't make long term plans or are concerned for our jobs or futures.

The diversity of our experiences, and also our reactions, can sometimes make us feel isolated as we become stuck in our thoughts and feelings. However, one of the greatest things that we as human beings do is connect with others socially. We all experience things differently, but we still manage to connect with others through empathy, compassion, understanding and altruism. We don't fully understand what we are each going through – but we at least care enough to try and understand and support each other.

Here are some strategies and tips you can choose to use to help support your emotional, psychological and wellbeing experiences through the pandemic:

Purpose – as humans, we can sometimes lose perspective on what's happening around us, as our brains are designed to focus on lots of different things at the same time but *really focus* on the one thing right in front of us. We are doing what we feel and believe is the right thing to do, and that is to try and reduce community transmission and by doing so help our families, communities, friends and co-workers. When you find that the experience of physical distancing is becoming overwhelming, it can help to remind yourself that you chose to do your part – and you can take pride in thinking of others health and wellbeing.

Time – many of us are looking forward to the time when we can go out and about and do those things in our life that we miss the most. How many of us are making tentative plans about a big family Christmas gathering so we can all get together after not seeing each other in person for months? The next time we can go to a favourite restaurant or café to catch up with our best friends and our stories with each other? Getting back into the outdoors, to enjoy our hobbies, sports and exercise routines? Attend children's birthday parties? The short term pain of distancing will hopefully help us in the future.

Common purpose – while it can feel like we are doing this by ourselves, and that few people can truly understand what we're going through, it's helpful to remember we are not the only ones experiencing these challenges in distancing. It is a great demonstration of our humanity that we are coming together to do what we think is the right thing. When we feel that distancing or our new normal is getting the better of us, take a moment to remind yourself we are doing this for each other.

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**.

