

Personal Tools for Managing your Personal Relationships during Covid-19

The current circumstances we all find ourselves in as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic is a test of our resilience, ability to cope and our relationships with others. It is understandable to feel anxious as we try to navigate through the uncertainty we are all facing. As with any crisis, we will need the support of those around us to get through it. Now more than ever, we need to be mindful of our relationships and how we communicate with those around us as stricter social isolation requires us to adapt our behaviours.

Here are some tools that can help you support and nurture your personal relationships as we shift into social distancing.

- Don't take things personally. Make allowances for the fact that we are all stressed. Stress can make you more sensitive in reacting to other's behaviours. Stress and anxiety can make others act out of character or even unkindly.
- Defuse anger and frustrations before they build up. Remind yourself that we are all experiencing challenges in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. Find ways to positively describe specifically what you're feeling in a single circumstance, how their behaviour impacts you and what you would like in the future.
- Stricter social distancing requirements means that for many of us, we may feel that our freedoms and our routines have been taken away from us as we are expected to remain at home. When you experience negative feelings with those around you at home, or if you are still in the workplace, pause and take a deep breath before responding to the other person.
- Be mindful of how you communicate with those around you, and be aware of their moods as well as your own. This can be as simple as asking "are you ok?" Make sure to label emotions such as "I'm feeling sad right now" and allow the thoughts to drift away. Alternatively, you may need to distract yourself with something you enjoy. Sometimes it can help if you make a conscious effort to do something to change the mood.
- Embrace technology. Whether you are a seasoned FaceTimer, Zoom user or new to the experience, this technology can be instrumental in keeping relationships healthy. Help older family members or colleagues get connected and see them smile.

While our routines may have changed, we should still make an effort to focus on important priorities to support our mental and physical wellbeing, so that we can still be our best selves to those around us. This includes relaxation, exercise and a healthy diet. The trick is to find what works best for you and those around you. Things that focus your attention are excellent stress relievers.

Whatever the nature and extent of your concern, feel free to call us on **1800 818 728**. Simply provide some basic details about yourself, and we will offer you a confidential appointment with a counsellor at a time that suits you. We are available 24/7 to provide immediate help for urgent matters. For more information or if you would like to learn more, you can access a selection of articles and tip sheets from our website www.accesseap.com.au.

