

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Change & Transition

TIP SHEET

Over the last three months Australians have experienced significant changes and transitions in their lives due to the COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing.

Now that the government has begun easing restrictions and measures put in place to protect our communities' health, our community will experience further change and transition.

While some people will be looking forward to coming out of lockdown and returning to their previous routines and rituals, some of us may mourn the loss of our newly found routines and the slower pace of life.

Any type of change and transition can at times be difficult to manage, and we have experienced continuous changes in the last few months.

Change can cause feelings of anxiety or stress and some people may feel like they are losing control again, or feel unsettled, and have difficulty concentrating, working or sleeping.



Lessons we may have learnt during the COVID-19 lockdown:

- **The value of human contact**
Social media does not fill the void created by not being able to hug others or have meaningful conversations with those that matter. Many have stated that they cannot wait to get together with loved ones.
- **A more relaxed pace to life is not a bad thing**
The restrictions gave us a chance to recalibrate and some of us discovered that we can enjoy our own company. Hopefully in future we will more readily step back from our hectic paces, not being afraid that things might fall apart.
- **Our relationships can grow**
Many of us discovered qualities about our family members that we hadn't noticed. Board games, TikTok challenges and other fun activities all served to bring families together and strengthen bonds.

- **“Nothing is constant except change.”**
This quote by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus was demonstrated well when the pandemic forced a sudden shutdown of life as we know it. Our capacity to accept change and deal with the issues that have come about as a result is central to successfully navigating life as we get back to a more normal routine.
- **Keeping mentally healthy is important**
To this end many found it useful to strive to keep calm and manage emotions by limiting the amount of time spent watching or listening to news. Getting news from reliable information sources contributed to a more positive mindset.
- **We can be adaptable**
Many found that they could live on much less than they thought they could by substituting costly recreational activities for cheaper ones. Families discovered that they could enjoy home cooked meals instead of opting for takeaway. This has resulted in lots of savings for many families and a sense of control.

- **Life experience for children and young people**
Rather than reading about significant historical happenings that have shaped our world, school students have experienced such an event firsthand. They have also witnessed the power of collective action and seen what can be achieved when communities work together and make sacrifices to overcome adversity.



Here are some tips on managing change and transition as people begin returning to a regular routine after lockdown:

- **Make a list of things you enjoyed and the good habits you would like to maintain**
This may include continuing to check on friends and family regularly, maintaining exercise routines and good nutrition, making time to continue our newfound creative hobbies and adapting a positive mindset.
- **Reach out to workmates and employers if you are feeling overwhelmed**
Getting back to work can be stressful especially because many may be anxious about infection. Working from home would have created its own challenges and many will not be returning to

work refreshed. Coupled with this, suddenly there will be routine where there has been none and many will have trouble refocusing. This could contribute to stress.

- **Take one change at a time**
Consider looking at isolation as something temporary that you can EASE out of, it's not all or nothing. Couples might need to re-negotiate what their new social life looks like, especially if one prefers less social outings than the other and actually enjoyed isolation.
- **Gain perspective**
Put the transition into perspective, by listing the things you can and can't control in this change so you have a clear objectives of what you can take action on
- **Revisit past projects**
Do a bit of a check-in around where you were at when isolation began – consider projects activities that need completing and revisiting.
- **Be prepared for friends or family to behave differently than before**
It might take some time for people to readjust to being back together – allow for awkwardness and new beliefs.
- **Remind yourself of other times in your life when you have navigated change successfully**
How did you feel after? What did you gain from the experience? How did you grow as a person? How did you show resilience in a time of transition? Collate your answers in a short note you can carry with you as a reminder of your change resilience.

- **Create a goals and wish list**
Whilst longer-haul holidays are off the cards for the time being we can still enjoy our State so plan some short term activity goals as well as some longer term wish list items to get you feeling inspired and motivated.
- **Understand your values**
This time of transition may bring up conflict between certain values. For example, a person returning to work may experience conflict between their values of contribution and reliability to an employer, and their values around being present with their children.

Begin understanding your values by writing them down and noting their significance to you, this may give you clarity about your beliefs and enable you to focus on what's important to you in this transition.
- **Reduce feelings of uncertainty**
One way to do this is to get familiar with the changes by keeping informed of the latest information on easing restrictions from the official government source: <https://www.wa.gov.au/government/covid-19-coronavirus>



Seeking Help

Relationships Australia WA is continuing to deliver support services for people across Western Australia during this unprecedented and difficult time and are providing support services over the telephone, video conferencing or online to clients.

If you or your family could use a little help, we offer many services and courses that are available to everyone, including mental health and family and domestic violence support. Our services are available to people of all cultural backgrounds, family structure, gender and sexual orientation.

Please call us on 1300 364 277 to let us know how we can support you and your family.

You can find out more about the range of support services we offer by visiting our website

www.relationshipswa.org.au.

If you need immediate support, please contact:

Lifeline on 13 11 14

Suicide Line on 1300 651 251

Mensline on 1300 78 99 78

Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800