



PERSONAL TOOL

LIFELONG LEARNING



This tool was created by one of our senior clinical team members, Kate McPhee, Psychologist & Clinical Associate Coordinator at AccessEAP.

When talking about learning with post-schooling adults, there is often a respectful groan or eye roll. Many people will tell you that they are not good learners and that they have no further skills or talents to learn. Thank you for reading our short piece as you, dear reader, are a lifelong learner! Anyone can and often does complete amazing levels of education at any age. I have met 22-year old's who tell me they are unclear on their direction but keep learning, and the most interesting people I know are the 40+-year-old's who are still learning. Lifelong learning is important at three levels:

- **Future-proofing** a career as those who see themselves as a lifelong learner can pivot from one industry to another.
- **Keeping up with change** and not feeling daunted by the many modifications that occur in work and life.
- **Key challenges** like climate change, poverty and inequality can be overcome because society is then made up of lifelong learners.

After a very bumpy twelve months, many in Australia and New Zealand are taking a moment to think about their work, life, and home and what they want that to look like. In clinical terms, this is called having agency (or control) over one's own life. This also applies to our learning as we are responsible for our own learning and the skills we want to learn. A commonly used formula for many organisations (including our own) describes the 70 20 10 optimal sources of learning. This theory claims that individuals obtain 70% of their learning and knowledge from job-related experiences, 20% from interactions with others and 10% from formal education. 70% hands-on are still deemed to be the most beneficial because it helps individuals discover and develop their skills, make decisions, and interact with people who are not necessarily in their sphere. This can also help individuals learn from their mistakes and turn these into opportunities so that an individual learns self-mastery – which helps alleviate mood disorders like depression.

Many people reading this will have demanding roles, partners, families and in some cases, parents. Finding time to play in all of this is quite difficult, and then to read a piece on lifelong learning can feel overwhelming. Dear reader – to keep your stress low and mental health high – learn the ability to play again. This is of course individual and will require some trial and error.

To assist those with large and demanding roles or in fact, those with a high level of demand and a low level of perceived control, an acronym has been developed – LEARN.





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- **L - Lifelong.** Make learning part of your every day and ensure that it is a priority (like doing the dishes) and ensure that what you are learning is enjoyable.
- **E - Educate** yourself with videos, books, places and travel
- **A - Active** - be active in the approach to learning and get curious to what is still out there to learn.
- **R - Reflect** on what your goals are and what skills you need to learn to get there.
- **N - Nurture** yourself, your self-care and your mental health. Although it feels counterproductive at the start learning a new skill forces new neural pathway to form in your brain and effectively take the pressure off the old ones. This explains why it can feel so difficult to learn a new skill but wonderful when it becomes easy.

If you are looking at pivoting, looking into a lifelong learning or currently undertaking some learning and would like some support – please give our friendly team a call. We are learning-just like you. Contact AccessEAP on **1800 818 728**.

