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## Leader Tips & Strategies

### Exploring diversity through the pandemic

#### Level playing field

1

Create a workspace and way of work where all of your people are not just invited to but will actively contribute to conversations. Now more than ever, the simple act of inviting comment or thought from your team is a powerful act that ensures that each person can feel valued and valuable.

#### No judgement

2

Each of us respond in very different ways. As leaders, we must constantly challenge ourselves to see each of our people exactly as that. While it does take extra effort to be the leader each of our people need us to be, this is made easier by creating an environment where your people know that they are in a psychologically safe space and they can be their best.

#### Shared experience

3

Remember, it is a very human response to difficult or painful circumstances to think that others cannot possibly understand what we are going through. In one sense they are right – we can never know exactly what they are thinking and feeling. What we can do is show them we empathise and care. Offer your people the opportunity to share their experiences. Remember, you don't need to fix their problems or provide solutions. Be present and listen.

#### Regaining control

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The pandemic has made many of us feel like that things are not always in our control and that COVID-19 is dictating how we live our lives. Many of us have chosen to follow what we believe to be sensible (if painful or annoying) changes to our lives so that we can help everyone get through this together. What we feel we have lost to accommodate the broader needs of our fellow Australians we can regain in other ways. Help your people find the things that they can be in control of in their work.

#### Take the first step

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for your people, while they might want, need or benefit from support, now may not be the time when they feel they are capable of doing so. One of the things that you can do is to check in with them. If they are struggling, or not at their best, you can offer to reach out to make an appointment with their EAP on their behalf.

#### Ask more questions

6

If a staff member or colleague takes the time to ring or meet with you, take the time to ask them some questions. While you are talking to them it won't take too much more time to ask about their experiences. Who knows a new idea may emerge from the conversation and may change some perspectives?



**Get educated**

7

Don't wait for the diverse and minority populations of your staff (and friends) to tell you of their experiences and what is happening for them. Get reading, watching and most importantly talking to others about their lived experiences.

**Validate and value**

8

Other people in our teams may do things differently but still end up with a great result. Validate that experience, skillset and approach and do so while trying to understand it. Your values may be called something different to your team members but still may be similar (if not the same) to what you hold dear. Either way, your awareness will be increased, and other problems down the road will be easier to tackle.

**Look at unlearning**

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Are there old ideas that you perhaps need to let go of? Is there a new way that you are perhaps resistant to because it just doesn't "make sense"? Leaders, and those that are agile and who adapt, understand that generating trust and connection with their people creates new perspectives and often new approaches to old problems. So, challenge your staff to explain and convince you of their approach to solving new (and old) problems. It can be fulfilling to see them grow.

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**.

