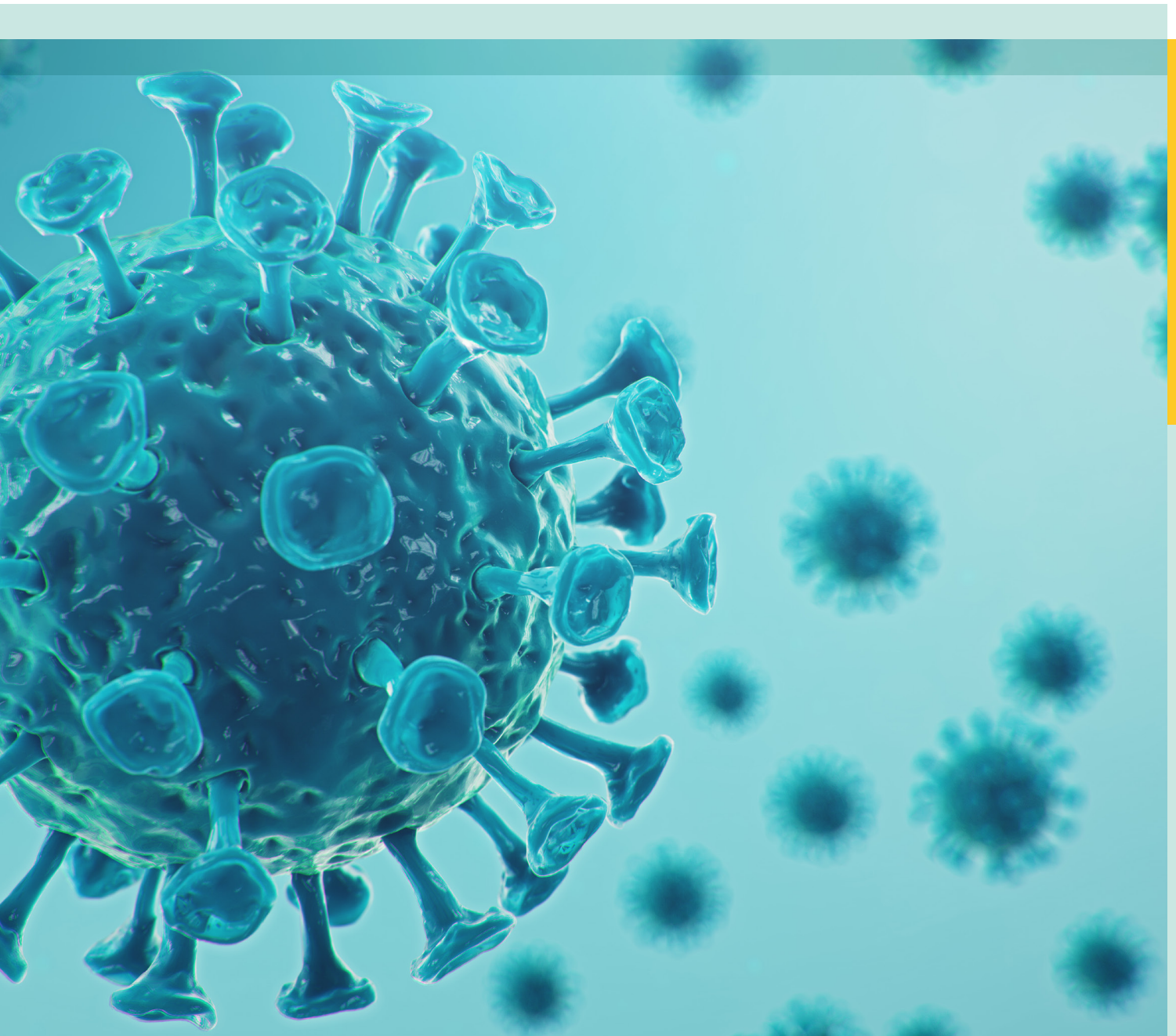


COVID-19

**A LEADERSHIP GUIDE
FOR BUILDING A BRIDGE
TOWARDS A NEW NORMAL**



"THE GREATEST DANGER IN TIMES OF TURBULENCE IS NOT THE TURBULENCE; IT IS TO ACT WITH YESTERDAY'S LOGIC."

Peter Drucker

Whenever we can go back outside with less restrictions, things will be fundamentally different. We need to prepare for that. We all want things to go back to normal quickly. But what most of us have probably not yet realised is that they won't. Some things never will.

Social distancing measures will remain in some form until a vaccine is available, which may take as long as 18 months. Normal life has stopped for billions of people the planet over. This is not going to be over anytime soon. The big risk is that we are psychologically ill-suited to understanding a new normal and fail to plan for it.

Leaders now need to turn their thinking to building a bridge with their workforce towards a new normal over the three phases of the COVID-19 pandemic:

Immediate crisis – we're in this now.

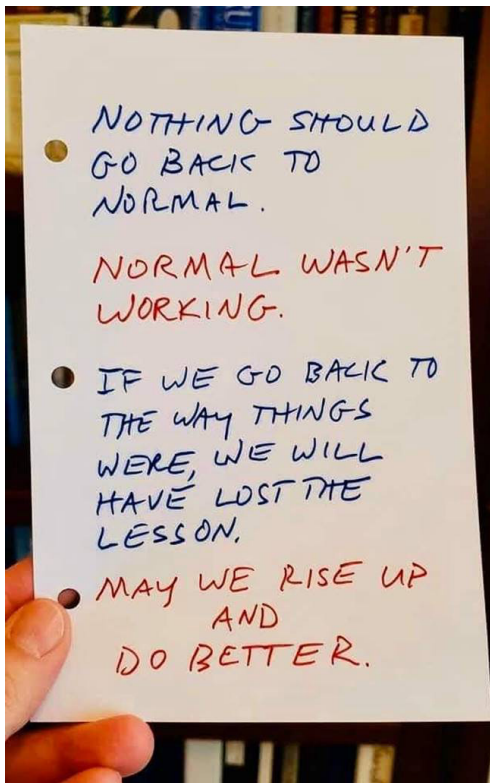
Transitional period – we're moving toward this.

Emergence of a new normal – we need to architect this. Starting now.

The transition period may last some time and it is important to start exploring the principles that could and should govern this hybrid reality.







Living and working in a state of pandemic for the foreseeable future

In this extended transition out of the acute crisis phase, organisations will need processes and principles to guide policy decisions and shape organisational and individual responsibilities. These will necessarily be temporary, dynamic and robust. How can we get the right balance of organisations being able to operate whilst not risking public or staff for an unknown time period with depressed consumer sentiment and pervasive anxiety about contagion?

The ways that people will change in response to COVID-19.

We will see possibly permanent and significant changes in how we think, behave and relate to one another. Our ability to focus, to feel comfortable around others, even to think more than a few days into the future, will degrade. But we may also feel the desire to cope by caring more for each other with an accompanying re-grounding in more enduring values and pro-social behaviour. Some behavioural changes may lead to a shift in social norms.

What	Who	When	How
can post plateau look like?	should return & in what way?	should return occur?	should return occur?
My near-term demand may move to digital. How do I pivot quickly? I am facing a deep financial trough. How do I preserve the business?	Many in my workforce like working from home, and productivity is up. Why come back?	I know I can bring the business back, but how do I know when it's safe to do so, and how might the business be affected if something goes wrong?	What would high-restriction operations look like in reality? What measures have other companies taken that have worked (versus measures that cause disruption without proportionate benefit)?

Source: McKinsey April 2020

Mental health and trauma impact

Loss of control of daily routine, a sense of normalcy, personal freedom, face-to-face connections and expectations of safety defined people's experiences during the 2003 SARS epidemic. Studies from the SARS, Ebola and Swine Flu outbreaks all recorded significant and protracted spikes in feelings of anxiety, depression and anger. People are likely to be cautious about frequenting crowded or closed in places like cinemas and stadiums or even public transport for some time to come.

Collective resilience and post-traumatic growth are other possible parallel futures that look like adapting and accommodating, rather than resistance to, the suffering and collective trauma.



- Which functions will come back first?
- Will their schedules change?
- Will remote work be part of the future?
- What equipment and resources needs to be returned and when?
- What plan, policies and procedures do we need to have in place first?

When will customers be back?

What do organisations need to deliver differently in terms of products or services to help restore customer confidence? COVID-19 may affect more people and businesses directly and have a more far reaching impact on organisations of all types than any crisis in the past half century.

Many people will certainly have higher sensitivity to germs and the risks of spreading infection. This behaviour alone will change many industries. Customers and workers will be more sceptical of close contact with others and physical proximity. Travel, eating out, entertainment and product preferences will be different tomorrow.

Start re-engagement NOW - work from work or work from home?

Begin thinking about re-entry as soon as possible. Getting people back to a normal functioning work environment will be hard work:

- Will everybody come back all at once, or will groups be eased back into the workplace gradually?

What will our workforces look like in the new normal?

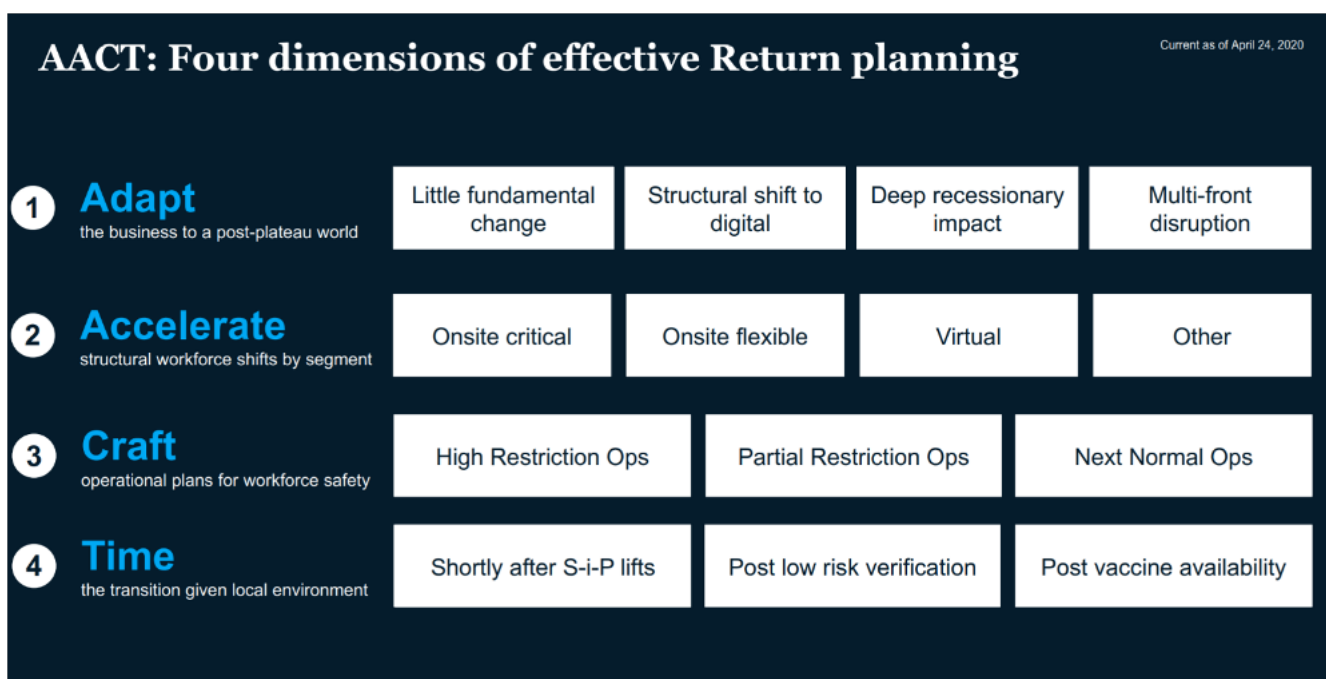
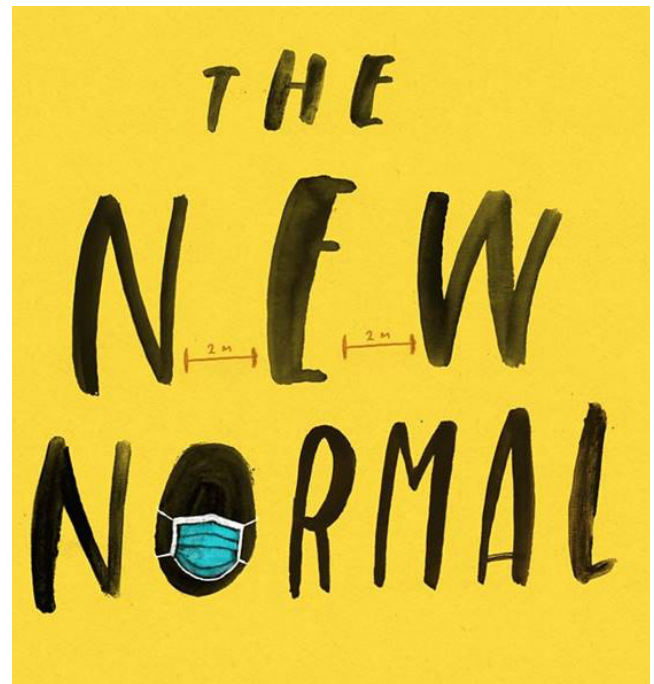
It is likely that organisations will have up to four types of employees. For all employee groups, leaders will need to examine if they need to shift employment contracts and whether to re-train to towards more flexible skill sets:

1. **Virtual / WFH** – remote support, connectivity, productivity, health

2. **On-site flexible** – safe RTW milestones, safety protocols
3. **On-site critical** – staggered shifts, slower ramp-ups, PPE
4. **Other** – transparency, reskilling, redeployment, redundancy

Pre-return, leaders then need to craft stage-based return to work plans that protect staff and customers / clients and incorporate public health guidelines and protocols for different the different workforce groups identified above.

Any return to work effort will be a gradual process rather than setting a national “go back to work” day. Employers have a duty under the Occupational Safety and Health Act to make sure they provide a safe workplace.



"The secret of change is to focus
all of your energy, not on fighting
the old, but building the new."

Socrates

Job risk classification



Risk factors

Identify where and how workers might be exposed to COVID-19 at work including:

- The general public, customers, and co-workers.
- Sick individuals or those at particularly high risk of infection (e.g. healthcare workers who have had unprotected exposures to people known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19). See the Occupational Risk Pyramid above to assess workforce occupational risk for your employee groups.
- Non-occupational risk factors at home and in community settings.
- Workers' individual risk factors (e.g., older age 55+, presence of chronic medical conditions, including immunocompromising conditions, pregnancy).
- Define and implement controls necessary to address those risks.



Administration controls

- Encourage sick workers to stay at home. If they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 ask them to call the National Coronavirus hotline (1800 020 080).
- Ensure policies and procedures require workers to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
- Be aware of workers' concerns about pay, leave, safety, health, and other issues that may arise and provide them with appropriate, useful information.
- Instruct workers to tell you if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19, have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19 or have been tested for COVID-19.
- Remind staff of their leave entitlements if they are sick or required to self quarantine.
- Talk with companies that provide your organisation with contract or temporary workers about the importance of sick workers staying home.
- Minimise contact among workers, clients, and customers by replacing face-to-face meetings with virtual communications and implementing telework where feasible.
- Establishing alternating days, staggered or extra shifts that reduce the total number of employees in a facility at a given time, allowing them to maintain distance from one another while maintaining a full work week.
- Providing workers with up-to-date education and training on COVID-19 risk factors and protective behaviours (e.g., cough etiquette and care of PPE).
- Consider entry protocols and temperature checking.
- Sample of document to sign. Sick family member at home.
- Ensure employees returning to work post-infection have obtained medical clearance to do so and tracing and isolation protocols are followed.

Keeping the workplace safe

Encourage your employees to...

Practice good hygiene



- Stop handshaking – use other noncontact methods of greeting
- Clean hands at the door and schedule regular hand washing reminders by email
- Create habits and reminders to avoid touching their faces and cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect surfaces like doorknobs, tables, desks, and handrails regularly
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning

Be careful with meetings and travel



- Use videoconferencing for meetings when possible
- When not possible, hold meetings in open, well-ventilated spaces
- Consider adjusting or postponing large meetings or gatherings
- Assess the risks of business travel

Handle food carefully



- Limit food sharing
- Strengthen health screening for cafeteria staff and their close contacts
- Ensure cafeteria staff and their close contacts practice strict hygiene

Stay home if...



- They are feeling sick
- They have a sick family member in their home

Safe work practices

Providing resources and a work environment that promote safety as far as is reasonable:

- Provide tissues, no-touch bins, liquid hand soap, alcohol-based hand sanitiser containing at least 60% alcohol, disinfectants, and disposable wipes for cleaning.
 - Post handwashing signs in restrooms.
 - Cleaning schedule checklist.
 - Non-reusable dishes / cutlery
 - Consider closing tea / break rooms and at minimum alter seating to ensure 1.5m distancing.
- “In contact with” is defined as requiring:
 - o Greater than 15 minutes face-to-face contact in any setting with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the period extending from 24 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed case; or
 - o Sharing a closed space for 2 hours or more with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, in the period extending from 24 hours before onset of symptoms in the confirmed case.

Physical distancing

- Flexible worksites (e.g., tele-work).
- Flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts).
- Increase physical space between employees.
- Increase physical space between employees and customers (e.g. partitions).
- Implement flexible meeting and travel options (e.g., postpone non-essential meetings or events).
- Deliver services remotely (e.g. phone, video, or web).
- Deliver products through 'no contact' pick-up or delivery.
- Limit or remove the exchange of cash.
- Limit the number of people who can travel in a lift at the one time.
- Implement building entrance controls.
- Re-organised seating with a head count limit.
- Assess use of shared spaces such as break rooms, toilets, hallways, desks, meeting rooms.

municate the important information your employees need. For example, you can create a "Coronavirus Q&A" communications channel or have managers doing a Q&A session. It is also important to try and halt any spread of misinformation.



Communication

Provide regular and succinct updates that address the current status of the virus in Australia, impacts on the workplace and policies and advice on good hygiene practices for work.

When sharing such information, it is important to keep it relevant to employees' positions, their geographic locations, and the nature of their work. People are scared, and they naturally have questions about COVID-19. There are simple ways to com-

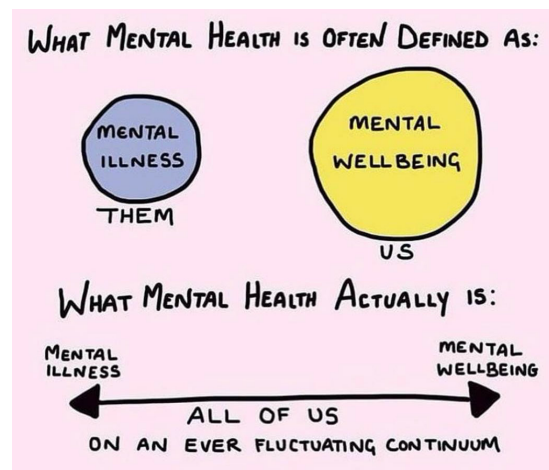
The future of work is the future of employee wellbeing

With the growth of the digital economy, our “always on” way of working, the stresses in managing work-life integration, and now dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, assisting employees to look after their wellbeing has never been more important.

Psychological distress will be a prominent emotion in workplaces across the world, and it's not something most managers know how to address. It will manifest in ways we haven't seen before.

Leaders need to view employee mental health decline as a clear and present danger to organisational recovery and a key opportunity and challenge to building a bridge towards the new normal. Lip service and tokenism will be viewed cynically by workforces and damage engagement, productivity and performance metrics. An integrated, holistic Wellbeing framework is required that starts at the top with genuine

commitment and flows through all layers of the organisation, supporting by training, quality information and communications and consistent behaviour. Building a culture that promotes resilience should be a top leadership priority with proactive programs that empower staff to take responsibility for their wellbeing during COVID-19 both promoted widely and freely available.



COVID-19 is having a big impact on Aussies' mental health

More than twice as many people report their mental health is 'poor'

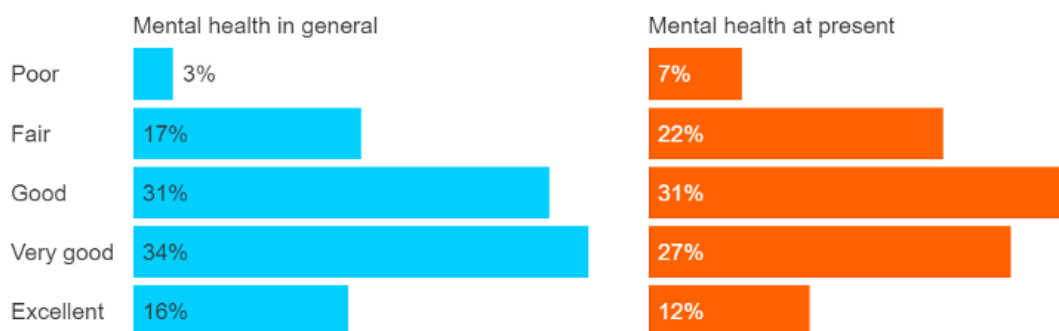


Chart: ABC News Story Lab • Source: Vox Pop Labs/ABC • [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#)

Mental health matters

Normal human responses to the global pandemic may be compounded by excessive workload, job uncertainty, working from home pressures and financial stress. Each individual will react differently and empathy and compassion will be needed to support each person transition with intact mental health through to the other side of this unprecedented challenge. Leaders need to initiate vulnerable, safe and authentic discussions about whole person wellbeing.

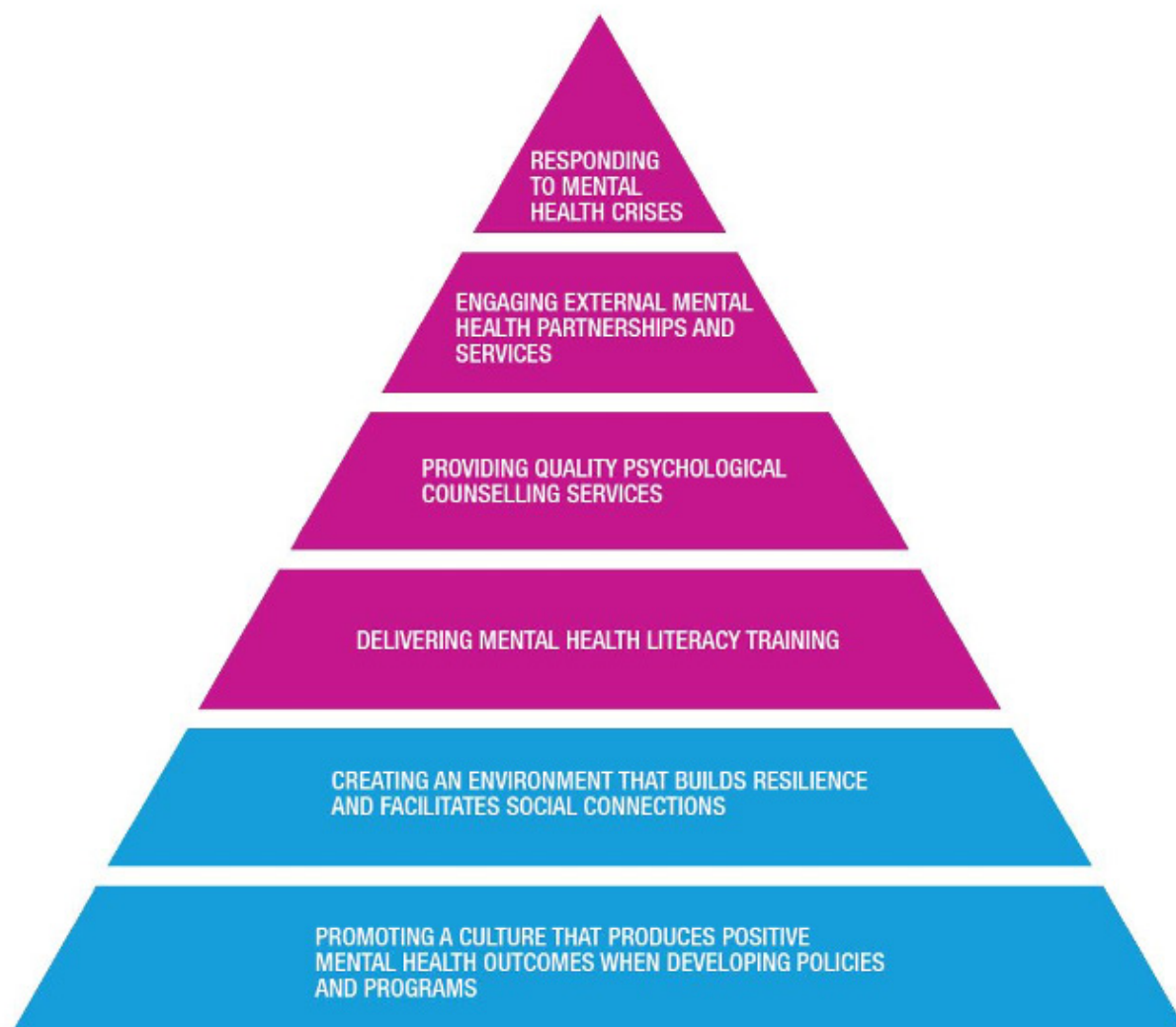


COVID-19 wellbeing plan

Leaders need to consider whole person wellbeing and formulate a comprehensive Wellness Plan that is preventative as well as reactive. Components could include:

- Leadership modelling of mental health awareness and wellbeing practices.
- Training in resilience, self-care and stress mastery.
- Innovative virtual mechanisms to enhance social connection.
- Promote Employee Assistance Program counselling and welfare checks.
- Provide online tools and tip sheets.
- Coach managers in how to support mental health as well as productivity.
- Zero tolerance for client aggression.

An integrated COVID-19 workforce wellbeing program



Isolation can be a persistent challenge in a remote environment

Current as of April 24, 2020

Personality

Certain personality traits (e.g., conscientiousness, agreeableness) can contribute to positive outcomes in a remote work environment

Time to complete

Any complex task that requires > 1 hour to complete causes a sense of isolation

Physical distance

The further an employee is physically from the "center of gravity", the more likely they are to experience isolation

Clarity of communicating

Managers that are good at communicating clear expectations have teams that are less likely to experience isolation

Expressiveness

Very few workers (~25%) share how they feel regarding isolation

Employee expectations

Employees hired directly into a remote work environment are more mentally prepared than employees whose work arrangements shift after the fact

Source: McKinsey April 2020

Learning will be radically transformed. We will be radically transformed.

This new normal of working will drive new ways to learn. Research and Markets has forecast the e-learning market to triple by 2025 to reach \$325 billion. That was before COVID-19. This estimate will only increase as companies have no choice but to launch a radical transformation of corporate learning. How will your organisation respond to this?

We are now operating in an age of radical transparency. How businesses act and the decisions they make during these times will have significant potential consequences. Try to find the opportunity in a crisis. Not because we should be looking to profit out of adversity, but because when things are bad we can still be a force for good. When things go back to normal, it's not going to be the normal that we were used to before and we must consciously shape it.



Which of your **previous expectations** need to be rethought? What prospects that seemed unlikely or years away could be accelerated?



What might **consumers value** in particular in these different worlds? How might that vary across key variables (for example, region and demographics)?



What are the **biggest threats** to your current business in these worlds?

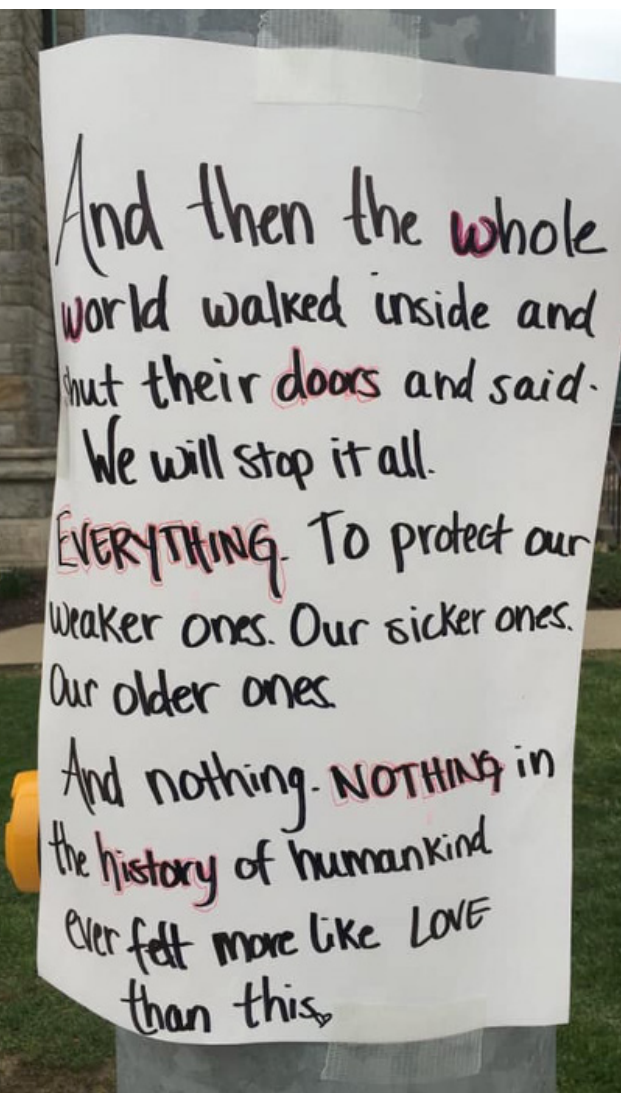


What new **providers, companies, business models, and ecosystems** might emerge? Which existing companies are best positioned to succeed?



What **capabilities, relationships, and assets** are important in these worlds?

Source: Deloitte 2020



A pandemic of kindness

We were flattened, and now we need to start standing up. Together. We will be designing a new future for ourselves. New work. New ways to work.

We'll restore the ability to socialise safely by developing more sophisticated ways to identify who is a disease risk and who isn't. Legally discriminating against those who are infected will occur with new Government apps, contact tracing, mass testing, temperature scanners and maybe proof of immunity cards (assuming getting the virus twice isn't possible).

Maybe we have realised that we can get by with less stuff and that consumerism adds little additional meaning to life that is characterised by impermanence. That what is enduring is human connection, a sense of contribution and love. Could this become our biggest lesson of all?

"One of the hardest lessons
in life to learn is figuring out
which bridges to cross and
which to burn".

David Russell

Future Thinc

Credible, flexible and impactful online learning from Future Thinc.

Future Thinc courses are created by Human Psychology psychologists. Human Psychology runs over 200 face-to-face workshops every year, training hundreds of leaders and employees in essential skills. Every Future Thinc course is broken into steps, allowing learners to fit it easily around their schedule, so learning can happen anytime, anywhere.

Numbers that speak

35+ training and development courses facilitated through different platforms

200+ trainings delivered a year nationally

2000+ people benefitted from training with us

As mental health professionals, we understand the impact of this pandemic on you, your employees and organisation, both now and into the future. In an unprecedented time for Australian workers and businesses, we have combined the expertise of our clinical team to pivot services to support you and your workplace during this challenging time however we can.

Contact us today:

training@humanpsychology.com.au

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