

# Building belonging and inclusion during the COVID-19 crisis

## A reference guide to support leaders on the journey

### SET UP THE BASICS

#### TECHNOLOGY

For you and your team

- Have you got the hardware, software and apps that you need?
- Do you have the internet capacity that you now require?
- Does your mobile phone have the data capacity and a hotspot should you need it?
- Does the team have access to file-sharing services such as Dropbox to help monitor revisions to jointly-owned documents?

#### HEALTH & SAFETY

- Adopt ergonomic practices, for example desk height and chair to ensure they are supportive.
- Invite your team members to complete a work from home occupational health and safety self-assessment.
- Wipe down your keypads, mobile phones, iPad and desk space regularly.
- If an Employee Assistance Programs is available, invite employees to access it.

### NORMALISE THE ABNORMAL

#### RESET EXPECTATIONS

- Give people permission that it's okay for them to be in casual clothes.
- Be explicit that it's okay if there are different noises and distractions in the background (kids, pets, etc.)
- Be clear that because we are working from home and socially isolated, it does not mean we need to be available 100% of the time.
- Acknowledge that people will be working at different hours to take care of their personal needs. Consider a team schedule of availability.

#### TAKE THE TIME TO CONNECT

- Get to know your remote team: Take time to understand what they will be juggling in these new circumstances (shared desks, computers, caring, etc.)
- Really listen to your team members and hold the space.
- Double-down on kindness
- Replace social activities such as Friday night drinks with Friday happy hour zoom or skype equivalent.
- Schedule regular one-on-one walking phone catch ups - a good way to combine exercise and connection for you and your team.

### COMMUNICATE TO BUILD TRUST

#### COMMUNICATE DAILY

- If in doubt, over-communicate - it helps to reduce uncertainty.
- Introduce team quizzes to kick start each day. It doesn't have to be work-related (e.g. guess whose desk this is?)
- Introduce a daily 15-minute stand-up (zoom / face time / skype) - keep it positive.
- Instead of calling people, face time them instead.
- Introduce a daily email / what's app wrap up using positive mindful approaches (e.g. a highlight of the day or something that made you smile).

#### BUILD YOUR NEW OPERATING RHYTHM

- Create new routines so people can work effectively together
- Track team priorities in a central place to keep a sense of shared purpose. This will also reduce risk if someone becomes ill.
- Consider your team's new connection devices (e.g. Microsoft Teams, Zoom, What's app etc)
- Set up video calls for team meetings. Share the positives.
- When hosting team meetings virtually, listen deeply and actively seek out diverse views. Give quieter team members the virtual floor first. Regularly check for understanding and agreement.
- Book-end your day with a 'commute' to separate work and home life. For example, a walk, a workout, meditation etc.

### REMEMBER YOUR OWN WELLBEING TOO!

#### REMEMBER YOUR RITUALS

- Keep, where possible, to your normal health and wellbeing rituals. You can exercise in your backyard or lounge room - there are lots of free internet exercise classes being offered.
- Take time each day to undertake mindfulness - Smiling Minds is a great app.
- If you feel anxiety creeping in, take two minutes to step outside and breath in the fresh air. Deep breathing reduces stress-related cortisone.
- Don't forget you need a routine too. Remember the basics, a shower and breakfast before sitting down at your desk.
- It's okay to show your vulnerabilities. You are human too.
- Be kind to yourself.

