

Transitioning between Bubbles

Coming out of our Covid-19 bubble is something everyone has been looking forward to. Mixed emotions will inevitably arise – hope, relief, anticipation, worry, apprehension, disappointment, and confusion to name just some of many. A shift between Stages of pandemic response impacts families and individuals in various ways, and most but not all those ways will be predictable to us. There'll be some surprises along the way. Experiences we didn't anticipate alongside with those we expected. Whatever our own experience will be it's important to recognise that each individual's transition between response stages is their own. We need to keep an open mind, prepare as best we can, continue to be kind, don't sweat the small stuff, and be flexible along the way. Our journey and transition between stages may not be the same as our colleague's, our neighbours, or the loved ones in our bubble and that's OK. We'll all move forward together but if it's at a slightly different pace – with different experiences, reactions, highs and lows than those around us in our immediate community – embrace it. It's simply us expressing the unique person we are. Here are nine useful tips to help transitioning from one response stage to the next:

1. **Value and look for the moments of stability and respite from uncertainty, and be aware that not everyone will respond or do what you expect them to at times. Be patient.** Everyone will adapt at a different pace. There'll be those for whom there's not much difference between Stage 4 and Stage 3, for example, other than more traffic on the road, or finally being able to get a tradie to visit or get on to some outstanding odd jobs. For others the change will be significant and highly disruptive as we have already adapted to a new normal and now need to adapt to another.
2. **Think about the new routines and activities you have really valued and ways you can keep them going.** Some things in lockdown will have been hard, but there will also have been opportunity to undertake new routines, get back into hobbies, and rediscover interests and activities at home. Just as workplaces have to redesign pre-Covid-19 routines, there are opportunities moving forward for individuals and families to do the same.
3. **Appreciate.** Wow, the things we have missed will be so much shinier than they were before. Having things, freedoms, and connections taken away is a great reminder of the small things we may have taken for granted but now have a new appreciation for. No matter the challenges ahead, those small wins we get back can put a smile in every day.
4. **Plan ahead.** Think about what you need, what has to be done (e.g. children back to school, family members back at work or working in a different way than during lockdown), and

what that means moving forward. The more prepared we feel we are the more relaxed and in control we will become. If our plans don't come to fruition, that's OK. The process of planning will help us adapt and create a new one.

5. **Optimistic realism.** While we are transitioning down the scale of pandemic response there is always the possibility we may have to transition back up at some stage, as a nation or as a region. Research has clearly found that those who have coped best with extremely trying circumstances have practiced underlying optimism tempered by immediate realism. While ultimate confidence is never lost there may be some hiccups along the way and we need to be aware of that. But, if we go back up the pandemic responses stage at some time and transition back up rather than down it is important to remember we will be better prepared due to prior experience.
6. **Continue to embrace new and expect change will be ongoing.** There has never been a better time to try something new and do things in a different way. Lockdown can provide powerful reflection and insight for new opportunities, interests and ways of doing things at an individual, family and community level. While continual change, even small changes, can be disruptive at times they can also lead to personal and professional opportunities. The power of reframing will be a valuable skill to learn and help us manage our initial response and perception of stuff that is new – both within our control and not.
7. **Try as best you can not to sweat the small stuff.** Nuff said.
8. **Experiencing some anxiety about infection is absolutely normal and OK.** It's what we do with that anxiety, high or low, that matters. It may take some transition time for some workers to get used to the new ways of working even though some essential workers have all had time to practice and adapt during lockdown. Help others adjust by respecting and modelling good infection control practices yourself, keeping to the standards established for safe work and community engagement. Show confidence in the personal protective measures you have put in place and implemented for both yourself and those you are responsible for and care for.
9. **Keep valuing the connections we have made.** As we come out of our bubbles it can be easy to lose the value of the connections we have established during lockdown.

On the more humorous side we all respond to lockdown in different ways. Over the page some might recognise these types of individuals among friends and family and, possibly, among ourselves on some days as we have all gone through this Covid-19 response together.

Type: The Escapee



Would sell a small child for an Eggs Benedict and a Flat White. Experiencing coffee withdrawal from their local café whether they drink coffee or not. Stands in the supermarket queue fantasizing of the days when they could spend a casual 10 minutes each day at the supermarket rather than spending an average 40 minutes twice a week in a queue with an ESSENTIALS list. Completed all odd jobs around the house in the first week. Slowly going crazy counting pebbles in the garden. Waves from the front window to those passing by as if long lost friends. Worries they have forgotten what the beach looks like.

Type: The Social Distancer



Stoic, determined to weather the storm, recognizes the need for sacrifice and personal compromise. Has become acutely aware of 2m social distancing and developed the spatial awareness of a savant when on local exercise rounds. Has mastered the art of 4 different exercise groups taking up two footpaths and two vehicle traffic lanes to maintain social distance without prior communication. Has developed baking skills to an art form and now smells the aroma of

yeast without it being present. Has taken the opportunity to learn a new hobby and mildly concerned returning to work may disrupt their acquisition of these funky new skills. Has stopped watching international infection comparisons on social media now confident that in the absence of competitive sport NZ appears to be winning this race.

Type: The Survivalist



Self-reliant, adaptive, calm on the outside, likes to think ahead and be prepared. Likely to already have an emergency kit prior to the pandemic, or at least most of one scattered across various parts of the house. May have spent time in the Boy Scouts or Girl Guides when younger, or wanted to. Probably already had a draw full of batteries, most expired, but just in case. Has likely undertaken some form of theoretical consideration and planning for the Zombie apocalypse or an alien invasion. Has a habit of not throwing anything away that might be 'useful', much to the chagrin of other family members. Now quite satisfied at being able to utilise various items collected over the years, and referred to by non-respectful family members as 'junk', creating items around the house, fixing things, and building stuff.