

# Developing a Family Continuity Plan

With all the talk about Business Continuity Plans, have we given the same time and planning attention to the home front and what awaits us there? RANSW suggests you develop a 'family continuity plan' to get you through.

A family continuity plan is similar to a business continuity plan, in that it is the process of creating strategies to prevent problems and manage pressures to a family. In addition to prevention, the goal is to enable the household to function as smoothly as possible, and to keep family relationships strong.

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## Call a family/household meeting

Be proactive and gather your family or housemates to discuss the changes that are taking place at home. As at work, create an environment that allows everyone to speak openly, without judgement.



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## Use the crisis to drive change

This is a time where household responsibilities can be acknowledged, shared and redistributed if necessary. There may be more work required given the increased numbers of people at home, but most people will have slightly more time on their hands given they are not travelling to work.

3

## Identify and discuss the negotiables and non-negotiables

Managing every person's expectations is vital to avoid unnecessary conflict including work hours and stations, meal options and mealtimes, routines, breaks, boundaries, exercise and chores. People like to work in different ways, and this should be acknowledged and respected.



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## Identify new stressors and brainstorm solutions

Make it OK to talk about the individual and collective challenges, understanding that you will each feel differently and have different needs. Some may worry about feeling claustrophobic or lonely. Some parents will worry about being able to support their children's learning while others will worry about accessing food and medication.

It is natural for us all to be worried about the likelihood of arguments and the strain on our relationships. Discussing all these issues and developing solutions up front will create a sense of structure and control.

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## Work with your strengths

Everyone has their own style and preferences. Not everyone will be able to adapt and change instantly. For example, introverts need alone time and simply telling them to be more sociable isn't going to work. Or, if you, as a couple, value separate time and interests, it is important to find ways to allow that to happen. Expecting instant change will create stress and unease.



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## Hold regular meetings and make changes as needed

Have meetings regularly to review how the family or household is coping and make changes as necessary. Keep a list of topics that can be reviewed, refined or changed e.g daily life working together, fair communication, managing adult versus children's needs, connecting with others outside the home. If permission is provided to talk openly and safely, issues will be identified, and changes can be made. It is important for families and households to work together as a team.