

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



December 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

As we move, or in some cases stutter and crawl, towards the end of an eventful and challenging year it is useful to reflect on the positive achievements we have all made or contributed to rather than focus on the barriers the world tried to put in our way. In the last e-Update I mentioned a few, including the sense of collaboration and looking out for one another's wellbeing and resilience that were evident throughout the year.

When the HSW Team reflected upon our achievements throughout this year, what struck me was the lengthy list of high quality outputs we had delivered. Did we achieve everything we set out to do this year? No. Did we deliver what we needed to maintain progress? Yes!

Given the drain on the HSW Team's resources that COVID and the related IMT, BCP and BRP work demanded throughout the year, I am immensely proud that the team continued to make positive progress rather than just accept a "holding" position. It is also important to acknowledge the help and support that the team received from across the University – not only in our COVID response but in our development work – notably the Improving Health and Safety Project.

I am sure that the above will be a common reflection amongst many teams at the end of this difficult year, so please do reflect on the positives you have achieved; don't beat yourselves up over plans that changed; and importantly take this festive break to recharge, regroup and come back next year ready for whatever unfolds.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE

Improving Health and Safety for Staff, Students and Contractors - Project Update

The project has moved on from Phase 1 now that all health and safety incident and issue reporting and management can be performed online. The HSW team continue to support and mentor managers and incident triage/ coordinators across their portfolios using the tools and reporting capability created by the project.

It would be fair to say that with the challenges of 2020 and significant activities around business recovery, year end, the new Strategy and the Voluntary Leaving Scheme, that the project has not gained as much traction as we would have liked. Early next year we will continue to encourage uptake of the online training available and use of online reporting and management.

The focus has now moved onto Phase 2, which aims to systemise the health and safety risk assessment processes. The team has been working hard to design a process that fulfils business needs and align it with Vault's functionality. Over the last quarter, the team determined the Vault configuration and options that will be deployed for risk management, with a view to piloting and deploying the solution in the new year.

Christmas wellbeing tips

Pressures on mental health do not take time off at Christmas, and with all the added stresses and uncertainties we have encountered in 2020 it is very important to care for your wellbeing. Here are some tips to support your wellbeing over the festive season.

Be active

Are you feeling tired and exhausted in the run up to Christmas? Research suggests keeping active can help beat tiredness. Why not try a walk around a Christmas market, a stroll to the beach or local bush or even take a swim.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



Take notice

Have too much to do before Christmas? Often we can be so focused on the growing to-do list that we forget to pay attention to what is happening now. Take notice of your surroundings – pay attention to all the seasonal smells of Christmas trees and summer blossom, freshly cut grass and cooking smells.

Keep learning

Stuck for Christmas present ideas? Why not take up a hobby, craft or learn a new skill? It can not only improve your wellbeing but also make for exciting, personal Christmas presents. Save Santa's elves a job or two!

Give to others

Feeling stressed this Christmas? Christmas can be a great time of year to do something for someone else. It doesn't have to break the bank – something as simple as a smile or a 'thank you' can help with your own wellbeing as well as theirs.

Connect

Feel lonely this Christmas? Christmas can be a tough time of year. Talking to and interacting with the people around you, whether that be family, neighbours or a friendly 'hello' to the person standing in the queue behind you at the shops, may help.

Keep your expectations of the festive period realistic

Many of us have a vision of what the holidays should look like, and are disappointed when they don't live up to our expectations of perfection. Remember, those ideals portrayed in magazines are not real, so don't pressurise yourself to live up to unrealistic standards!

Coping with anxiety

Christmas parties and events can be stressful if you struggle with social anxiety. Don't feel pressurised to say 'yes' to every invitation – you are allowed to decide which festive events and traditions are more important and enjoyable for YOU, and decline the activities which cause you unnecessary stress.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



Christmas prep causing stress?

Christmas can be a huge source of stress, and it's easy to feel there's too much to organise, or too much pressure on you – but don't hesitate to reach out for help if you need it. Ask a friend or family member to help you with chores, or contact local mental health services who can offer support, advice and resources.

Take some 'me time'

The holidays can be an overwhelmingly social time, with gatherings of family, friends and colleagues. Don't forget that you're allowed to set aside some 'me time' as well, such as curling up to read a favourite book or watch a Christmas TV special.

Links to sites for more tips

[Tips for reducing stress this Christmas](#)
[Getting through together](#)



HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING E-UPDATE



This and previous issues of the HSW E-update are available [here](#).

As usual, if you have any query on anything related to health, safety or wellbeing, please do not hesitate to contact us on hsw@auckland.ac.nz.

Similarly, if you have any suggestions as to topics you would like us to cover in future e-updates, please get in touch.

Angus Clark

Associate Director – HSW