



What happens when the family system encounters the work system and the school system during a pandemic?

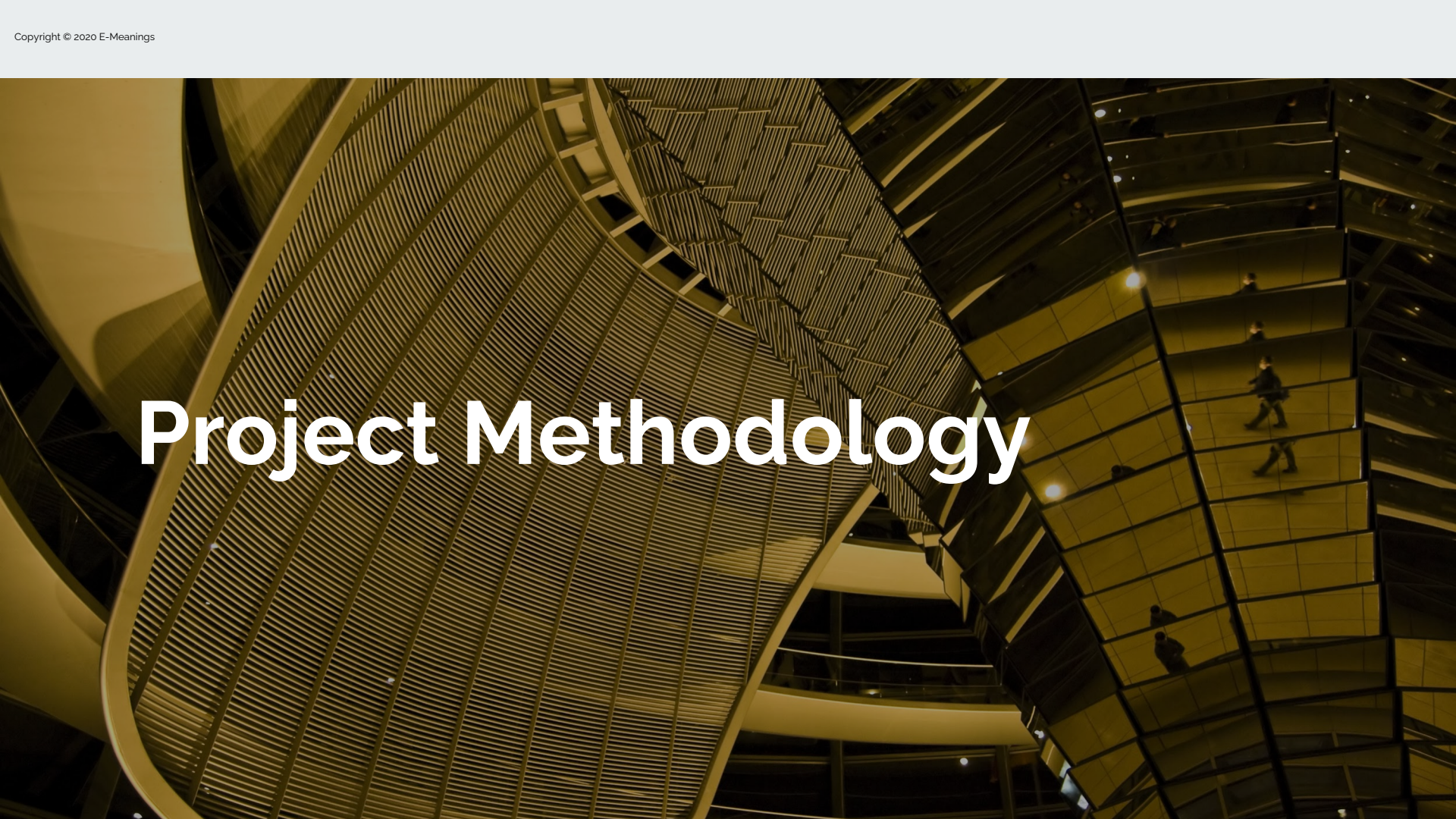
A project investigating the intersection of the family, school, and work systems, during the Covid-19 lockdowns. May-September, 2020.

Our project tested the idea that:

Working remotely during the coronavirus outbreaks is characterised by a loss of separate identity between personal and professional lives.

Project Consultants:

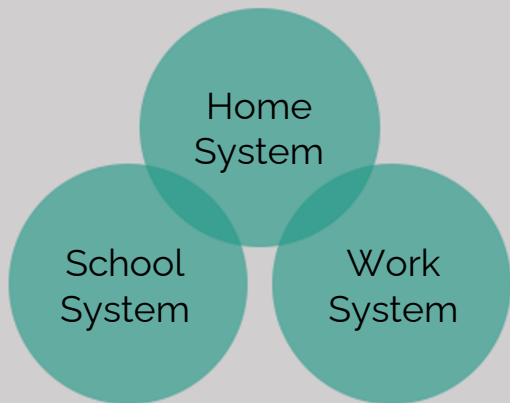
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Project Methodology

Had boundaries changed during lockdown?

Pre-Lockdown Boundaries

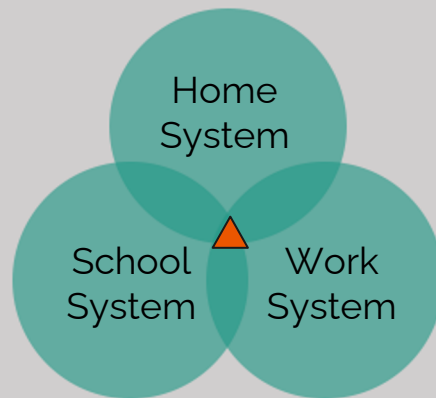


A representation of boundaries Pre C-19

The diagram below represents our idea of the Pre-Pandemic Society (left), with parents and children negotiating a system, which mostly keeps the school and work systems apart, with the home system intersecting each system.

We were interested to discover if the boundaries of the home/school/work systems really did merge during the lockdown (right), and if this was connected to a sense of boundary and identity loss.

Lockdown Society - Merged Boundaries?



Loss of identity in the merging systems?

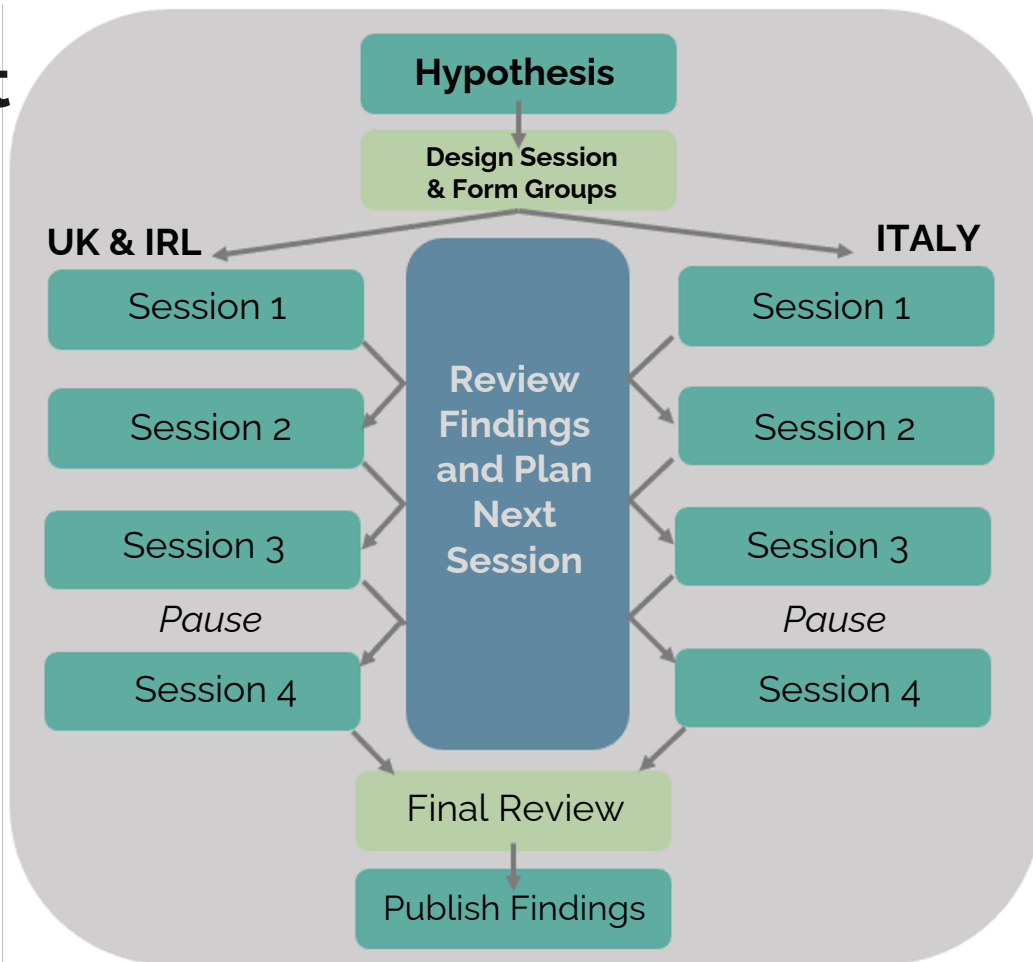
Designing time to reflect

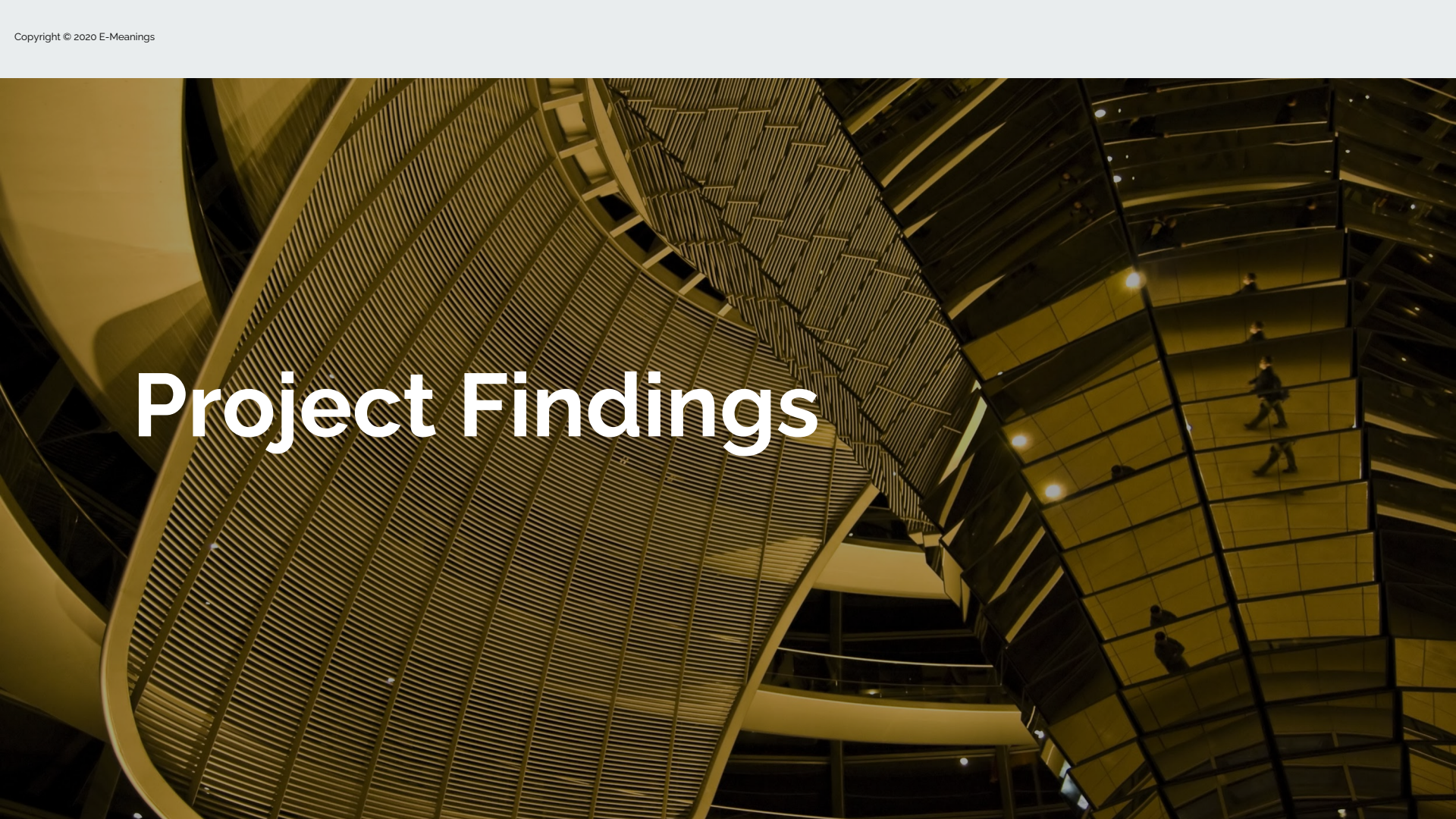
The participants - mostly unknown to one another - met on Zoom calls once a week for three weeks during May 2020 and came back in September for a feedback session.

The differences between the Italian and UK/Irish territories were remarkable, as were the participant's journeys through Covid-19 first lockdown.

Their fears, hopes - and all the emotional complexity that such a previously un navigated experience can solicit - emerged strongly through the participants' contributions.

We co-created a reflective space, one which gave voice and meaning to their experience.





Project Findings

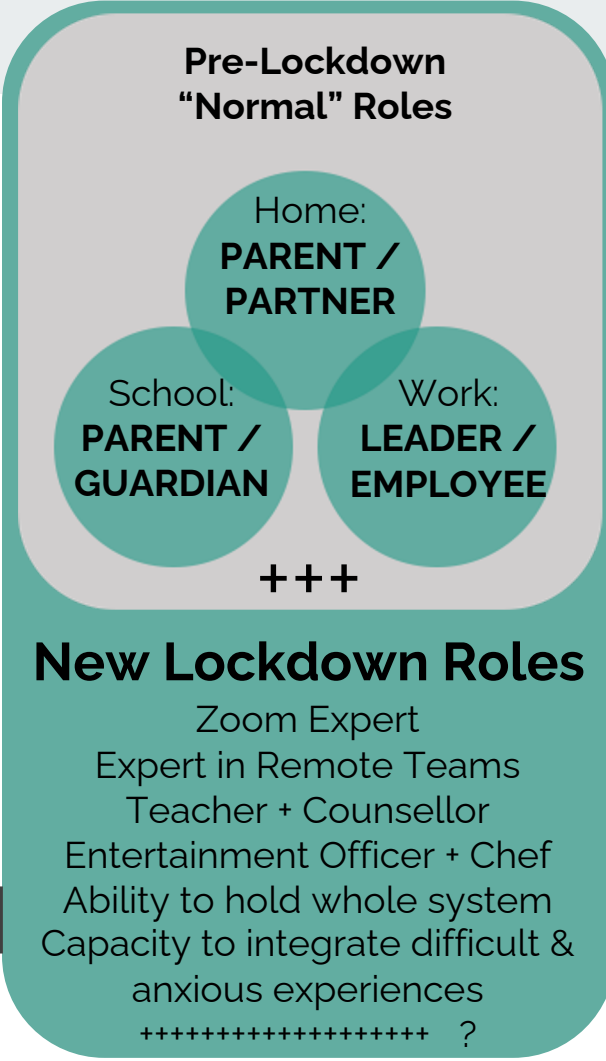
Challenging & Complex Lockdown Roles

Parents may have been adversely affected by the need to take on so many complex, and sometimes overwhelming, roles.

We can create a safe space for working parents to explore their ability to negotiate, and take on new roles as they return to the workplace, or as they continue to work remotely.

In this way, as organisations emerge from lockdown, parents can be assisted in their transition to life 4.0, knowing when and how to ask for support in taking up the new roles which they might need to find post-lockdown.

What has been learned from these new skills in finding and taking up roles?



Where do I belong? Who am I?

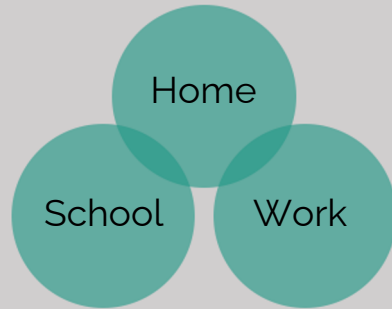
Systems of belonging have been squeezed and morphed into new structures. What was taken for granted and simple (clearly defined roles, boundaries and tasks), changed overnight.

Working parents lost a lot of their working identity in this process, but sharing these experiences in groups, can help parents to recognise where they lost their identity, and to see how others have similarly lost and re-found their identities.

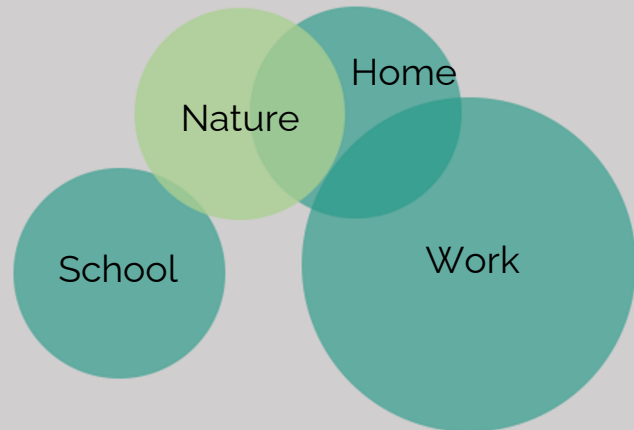
***What can we learn from how others have navigated re-finding what was lost?
What can they learn from us?***



I recognise this!



What's this though?



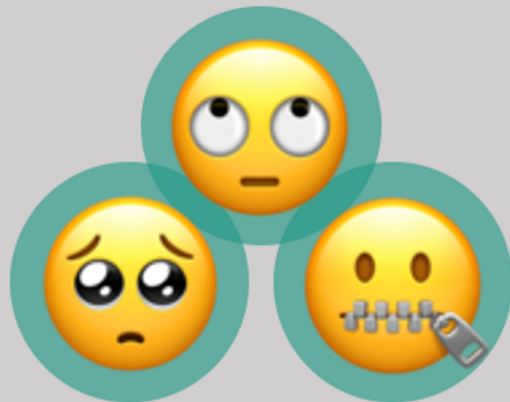
Re-finding a Sense of Curiosity

Giving space to share and think can give rise to finding the desire to explore, and give life to a sense of curiosity to explore this new post-lockdown world.

Being curious means that you can balance feelings of being e.g. frightened or weary/desensitised. Taking care of each other can enhance the capacity to face anxieties, and moderated reflective groups can help this aim.

What have we learned about our capacity to explore the possibilities presented by change?

Acknowledging, and reflecting upon difficult experiences



Parents are real people & children are real people too!



Parent/child relationships have also changed. Both have met each other's previously unknown identities.

Children have encountered their parent's working identity, and parents have met their children's learning identity.

There is an opportunity to re-evaluate previous idealised and omnipotent images (such as the perfect schoolchild, and the satisfied working parent). In this way, authentic and vulnerable aspects of the parent/child relationships can not get lost, as parents consider returning to the office workspace, and children return to school.

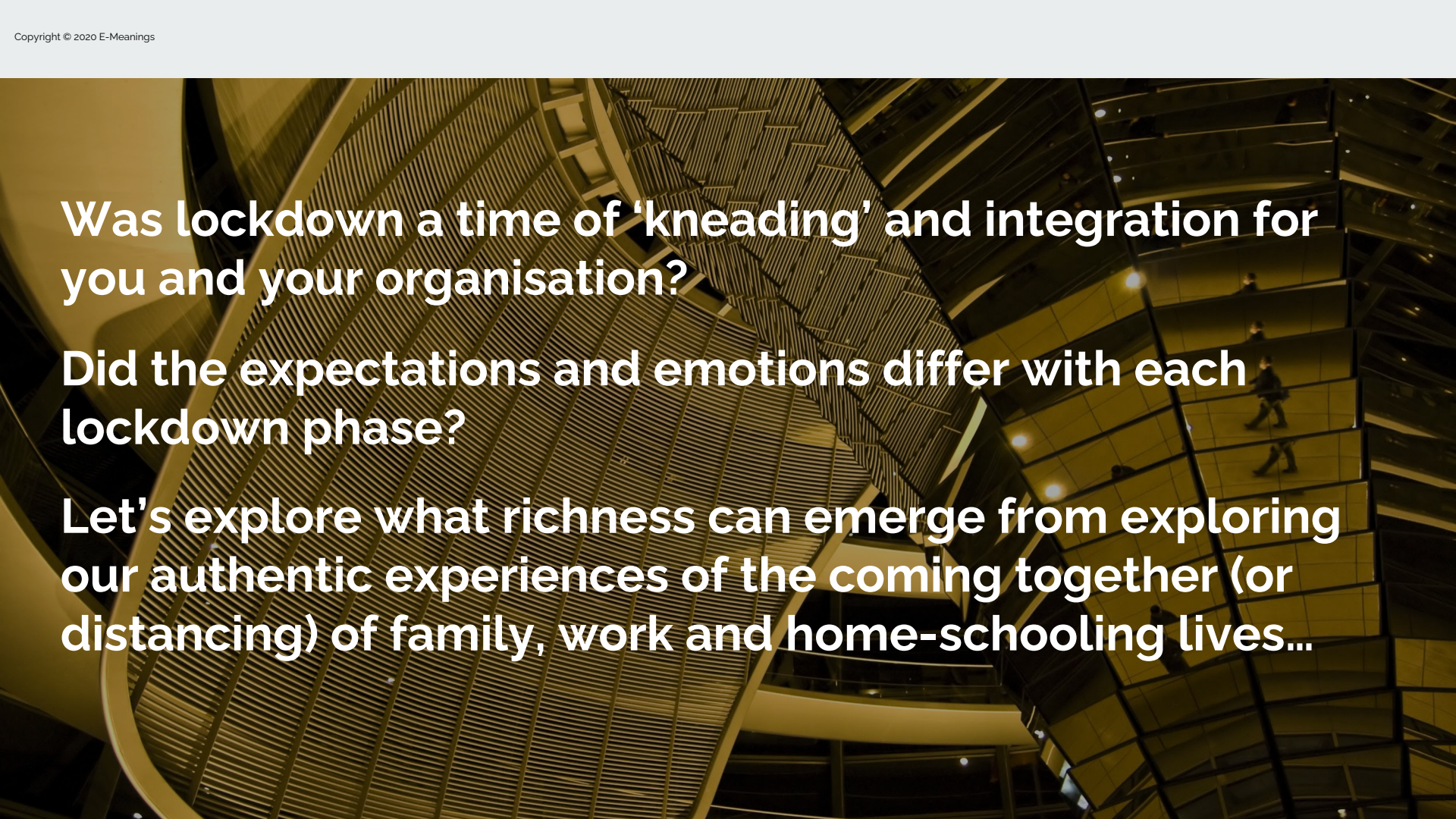


What have we learned about difference?

A key concept of our project is:
Impastare - Italian - to knead. As a metaphor, it is key, referring to the combination of water and flour, with the effort of 'getting stuck in' to kneading, to bind and create a new whole.

For many, the change to truly find a sense of harmony and integration between the three systems of work, school and family life was very challenging during the Spring 2020 lockdown, and remains challenging.





Was lockdown a time of 'kneading' and integration for you and your organisation?

Did the expectations and emotions differ with each lockdown phase?

Let's explore what richness can emerge from exploring our authentic experiences of the coming together (or distancing) of family, work and home-schooling lives...

A Consultancy Program for Parents, both Leaders & Staff ::



To address these challenges we have designed a program of 8/10 sessions directed at leaders and working parents in organisations with the objective of creatively facilitating the development of an emotionally integrated experience of the pandemic. In this way, we guide organisations in the definition of new and re-negotiated rules of co-living, re-finding a sense of belonging in the organisation for working parents

Our program will focus on the following points:

1. **Elaborate** on the experience of merging boundaries in a shared and safe space.
2. **Identify** new identities, roles and boundaries from their challenges and resources.
3. **Build** new belongings and narratives of desire related to integrative identities.
4. **Share** learning experiences with the whole organisation, creating new opportunities in the systems.



Thank you

