



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Support during COVID-19 outbreak

The outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19 has impacted people in varying ways on an international scale. It is understandable that during times like this, people may be feeling afraid, worried, anxious and overwhelmed.

This factsheet provides details of how to access mental health supports and wellbeing tips during this time

Local supports

MPHN Central Access and Navigation Service

1800 931 603 (Monday to Friday 9am-5pm)

NB: This is not a crisis service

Murrumbidgee AccesssLine

1800 800 944

Online and phone supports

Beyond Blue's Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service

1800 512 348 (24 hours/7 days)

Australian Government's Head to Health

www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support

Kids Helpline

1800 55 1800

www.kidshelpline.com.au

LifeLine

13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days)

Text: 0477 13 11 14 (6pm – midnight AEDT, 7 nights)

Chat online: www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat (7pm - midnight, 7 nights)

Tips and tricks

While it is important to stay informed, the following are some mental health and wellbeing tips and strategies to continue looking after ourselves and each other during these difficult times:

Manage your exposure to media coverage as this can increase feelings of fear and anxiety. Be mindful of sources of information and ensure you are accessing good quality and accurate information.

Follow a “calm yet cautious” approach – do your best to remain calm and be mindful not to contribute to the widespread panic that can hinder efforts to positively manage the outbreak. Ensure you are following directives issued by the government, medical advice and observe good hygiene habits.

Show compassion and kindness to one another – in these difficult times it is important that we strengthen our sense of community by connecting with and supporting each other. Remind ourselves that we can manage this much better together in solidarity, and that COVID-19 doesn't discriminate – it can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, nationality or ethnicity.

Actively manage your wellbeing by maintaining routines where possible, connect with family and friends (even if not in person), staying physically active, eating nutritious foods and seeking additional support as required.



Coping strategies

Some ideas for coping during social distancing, self-isolation or quarantine:

- **Perspective** – try to see this time as unique and different, not necessarily bad, even if it's something you didn't necessarily choose
- **Connection** – think of creative ways to stay connected with others, including social media, email and phone
- **Be generous to others** – giving to others in times of need not only helps the recipient, it enhances your wellbeing too.
- **Stay connected with your values.** Don't let fear or anxiety drive your interactions with others. We are all in this together!
- **Daily routine** – create a routine that prioritises things you enjoy and even things you have been meaning to do but haven't had enough time. Read that book, watch that show, take up that new hobby.

Stay connected

If there is someone you think may struggle through social isolation, it is important to reach out to them and let them know you care:

- Call them to check on their welfare
- Send an email
- Leave a note under their door
- Don't underestimate the power you have to offer hope to another person.

Encourage people to get creative with how they interact, here are some ways to stay connected:

- **Set up a gratitude tree** – where every member posts a message or sends a text to other members to share something they are grateful for.
- **Find a buddy, or group of, to set daily challenges with.** These could include a healthy habit, a mindful practice, or a creative pursuit.
- **Set dates and times** to watch the same TV shows/movies with someone and message each other your thoughts along the way... kind of like Goggle Box but you're not sharing the couch!
- **Join your local community social media group.** This will keep you up to date with what's going on directly around you.

Supporting children

This is an uncertain time for everyone, and children may be impacted by fear and anxiety.

Here are some tips on how to ensure your children are supported:

- Give your children extra attention and reassurance. Where possible, minimise their exposure to media and social media that may heighten anxiety
- Acknowledge your own feelings about the situation and let children know it's okay to share their own feelings
- Include your children in plans and activities around the house