



Australian & New Zealand
Mental Health Association

Looking After Your Mental Health During a Pandemic





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Coronavirus (COVID-19)

In light of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we recommend checking the [World Health Organization website](#) for the most accurate and up-to-date information.

We have also created a [series of free templates](#) to help you share important information, faster.



About this Guide

Global health scares can bring about a range of big changes, leading to feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and higher levels of stress.

We understand how important it is for mental health to be prioritised throughout these times. That's why we want to provide you with advice, tips and guidance on how to look after yourself, reduce stress and help to share trusted, quality information.



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Caring For Yourself

Anxiety, distress and concern are just some of the feelings you may be experiencing in relation to the coronavirus (COVID-19).

While it is reasonable to be concerned, it is also important to ensure you are taking the right measures to remain practical and logical.

There are also many steps we can all take to support and manage our mental and physical health and wellbeing during such times.

This includes:

Balancing your exposure - with the amount of information flooding the media, large amounts of exposure can leave you feeling overwhelmed. Be mindful of the sources you are consuming and stick to trusted, accurate information.

Keeping healthy and active - a healthy mind and body can assist in coping with stress and anxiety. Stick to a balanced diet and stay active with regular exercise and meditation.

Talking it out - share your concerns with friends, family and colleagues. You won't be the only one with these strong emotions. By finding a group to discuss your concerns with enables you to alleviate concerns and share advice on how to best support each other during this time.



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Maintaining Mental Health in Self Isolation

There are many different ways to ensure you're taking time out for your mental health during self-isolation.

Use the following tips as a guide or share them with someone in need!

- Remind yourself that this is only a temporary period of isolation, and that things will return to normal.
- Stay connected with friends, family and colleagues
- Engage in healthy activities such as reading, hobbies and exercise (there are a number of free workout apps and video material you can access online)
- Stick to a regular sleep routine
- Try to maintain a fresh, balanced diet (think home deliveries of fresh produce)
- If you are working from home, aim to maintain a healthy balance by allocating specific work hours, taking regular breaks and, if possible, establishing a dedicated work space
- Avoid over consumption of social media - fake news and personal opinion can also lend itself to feelings of stress and anxiety
- If you feel overwhelmed, seek support via professional services such as Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636)



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Social Distancing: What is it and How Can it Impact on Mental Health?

In order to stop the spread of disease, social distancing measures are put into place.

This involves restricting the amount of contact individuals have with each other, and largely consists of staying home, avoiding crowds and refraining from touching one another.

Despite only being a temporary measure, being separated from your usual social routine (whether it's work or leisure) can lend itself to increased feelings of loneliness, separation and isolation.

Those with existing mental health conditions can also come to find an added strain on wellbeing, with increased levels of distress, depression and PTSD.

As people practicing social distancing are spending more time alone, they are also more likely to be spending greater amounts of time online.

When combined with greater exposure to pandemic information - and in many cases, misinformation - this can trigger larger amounts of unease.

In order to practice safe social distancing, it is important to stay connected and try as much as possible to maintain a balanced and active lifestyle. Make time to switch off from technological devices and as much as you can, try to stick to a healthy routine.

If you are feeling unable to cope or are having ongoing issues relating to mental wellbeing, contact one of the national helplines listed below



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National Mental Health Helplines

Lifeline - 13 11 14

Beyond Blue - 1300 22 4636

MensLine - 1300 78 99 78

Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800

eheadspace - 1800 650 890

Mindspot - 1800 61 44 31

QLife - 1800 184 527



Mental Health Self-Help Resources

- [Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)
- [Coping with Stress During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)
- [Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)