



MENTAL WELLBEING IN THE PANDEMIC

The level of anxiety symptoms across the community is increasing with the rise in Coronavirus cases.

Anxiety levels will continue to rise.

It is important to manage our stress before it becomes debilitating anxiety.

It is to be expected that people will experience great stress and increased anxiety due to the pandemic.

If you are having these feelings, you are not alone.

Fears about our health and the health of the people we love, fears associated with an economic downturn, conversations with the people we interact with and constant media coverage all feed anxiety levels. Social isolation can also add to everyone's stress and anxiety.

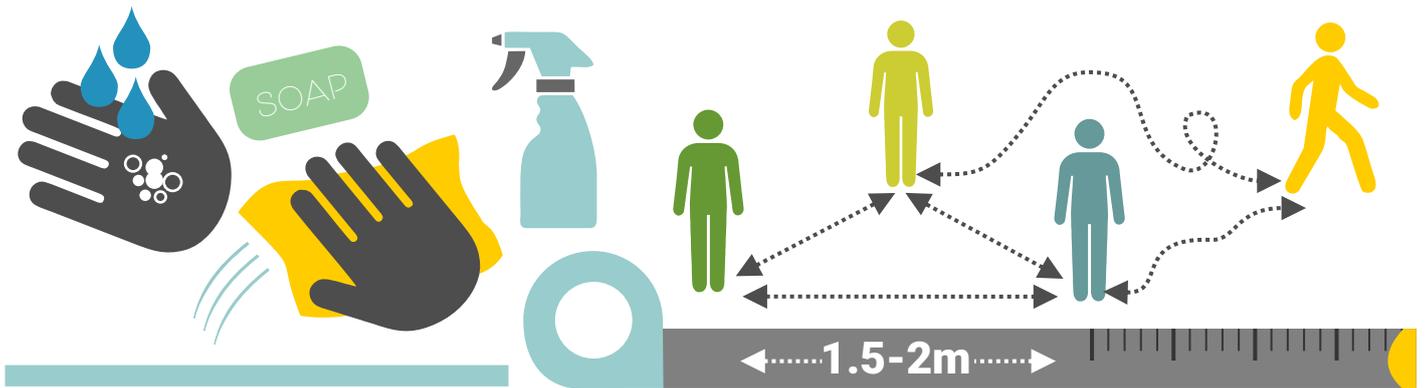


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Take a reality check

- Try to keep things in perspective. Remember, that being stressed can amplify our concerns.
- Ask yourself if you are assuming a worst-case scenario?
- Are you assuming “something bad is going to happen to me”? Are you over thinking the situation? The number of confirmed Corona virus cases and deaths in Australis is relatively low and it is possible to reduce the chances of transmission by correct hygiene and distancing measures.



- Focus on practical measures and things you can control to minimise the risk of contracting the virus rather than wasting energy catastrophizing and ruminating over worst-case scenarios.
- If you are concerned about the personal financial consequences of the Coronavirus, take practical steps to minimise these effects.
- This may include the following steps:
 - Contacting your financial advisor or a trusted friend or family member who can give you good advice
 - Contacting a financial counsellor
 - Developing a revised budget
 - Contacting your bank to request a pause on loan repayments
 - If eligible, seeking government payments
 - Drawing up a list of your options and developing a plan, rather than ruminating or catastrophising can help ease your anxiety

Media sources and misinformation

- Try to limit exposure to media coverage to finding out sufficient information about how to preserve one's health and information about retail and public space restrictions etc.
- Avoid un-informed sources and rumours.
- Rely on reputable news coverage from organisations such as the ABC and trusted sources such as the Australian Government's Health website or the World Health Organisation's website.

Self-nurture

- Look after yourself especially at this time.
- Ensure good nutrition, exercise, adequate sleep, keeping in touch with friends and family by phone, on-line platforms or messaging.
- Stay connected to other people, even if not face-to-face.
- Continue doing the things you enjoy if it safe to do so, such as watching movies at home, taking walks, swimming, preparing your favourite meal or having treats, even taking a relaxing bath!
- If you have issues with drugs and/or alcohol that you consider you need help with, you may care to investigate on-line 12 Steps programs meetings:
- Practising acts of kindness, such as contacting isolated older people, sending someone flowers via an on-line service or supporting a charity if you can afford to do so promotes mental wellbeing.
- Minimise your use of alcohol and avoid using tobacco or illicit drugs to manage your anxiety.

[Alcoholics Anonymous](https://aa.org.au/meetings/online-aa-meetings/)

<https://aa.org.au/meetings/online-aa-meetings/>

[Narcotics Anonymous](https://www.na.org.au/multi/online-meetings/)

<https://www.na.org.au/multi/online-meetings/>

[Smart Recovery](https://smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au/online-smart-recovery-meetings-2/)

<https://smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au/online-smart-recovery-meetings-2/>

The Buttery Intake line may be of help to you if you live on the NSW Mid North Coast or in the Northern Rivers Region:

intake@buttery.org.au

02 6687 1111

(phone during business hours)

Meditation and mindfulness

Practising relaxation, meditation and mindfulness will help you reach a calmer state and help relieve your feelings of anxiety.

There are a number of free on-line resources that promote mindfulness, meditation and relaxation. This includes free downloadable apps.

Seeking professional help

If you feel need professional help, contact your GP and ask for a referral to a qualified psychologist. Sessions with a psychologist may be covered by Medicare. It may also be possible to access psychological services by telehealth .





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