



## **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING DURING SOCIAL DISTANCING & ISOLATION**

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To help control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) globally, many countries are either practicing social distancing, self-isolation, or more controlled lockdown.

Understandably, this is proving challenging for many people. Separation from friends and family, loss of freedom, and for some reduced income, is creating additional stress and anxiety in people's lives. For others, it's long-term concern or worry while the World fights and manages the virus. Below you will find a few useful tips to help you during this period to maintain your mental health and wellbeing:

### Keep the **connection** with others

- ✓ Take the time to call or video chat with your loved ones (Google Hangouts, FaceTime, Messenger, Skype, WhatsApp all provide free or low-cost connections accessible over the internet).
- ✓ Organise regular or recurring video calls with groups of friends to keep up contact.
- ✓ Get creative – organise online sessions with friends to cook together, have a book club, or learn a new skill.

### Get some **exercise** every day

- ✓ For those that are unable to go outside, there are some good free applications available online to practice – just Google, and plenty of options will come up.
- ✓ A daily walk outside (for those that can) is always recommended to break up the inside routine and get some fresh air.

### Refer to the **right sources for information**

- ✓ Separate factual information from imagined fears that may be fueled by fake news articles on social media.
- ✓ Refer to valid sites such as:
  - [Australian Government Department of Health](#)
  - The Department of Health has developed a collection of resources for the general public, health professionals and industry about coronavirus (COVID-19), including translated resources. [bit.ly/380OwHe](https://bit.ly/380OwHe)
  - [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
  - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides reliable information about the coronavirus such as its symptoms, steps you can take to protect yourself, and what to do if you are affected. [bit.ly/39MEml8](https://bit.ly/39MEml8)
  - [World Health Organization](#)
  - The World Health Organization provides information and guidance regarding the current outbreak of coronavirus disease. [bit.ly/3cQUwCw](https://bit.ly/3cQUwCw)

### Manage **fear and anxiety**

- ✓ Remind yourself that this period of self-isolation is temporary and think of the benefits of self-isolation to the wider society, including slowing the spread of the virus and protecting those most vulnerable in your community
- ✓ Don't overuse social media as you are likely to be exposed to negative news and get drawn into doomsday ideas.
- ✓ In your spare time try to keep your mind busy with activities you enjoy such as reading, watching movies, exercising and even spring cleaning your home.
- ✓ Structure your day when working from home – allocate specific work hours, schedule breaks and set-up a dedicated work area if possible, where distractions are limited.
- ✓ Practice mindfulness and meditation techniques, examples include:
  - Smiling Mind - free mindfulness meditation app to help you look after your mental health and manage stress and daily challenges.
  - Headspace - free "Weathering the Storm" program available to help support the global community through this time including a curated list of calming meditations, help with sleep, and at-home workouts or movement exercises.
  - 'FACE COVID' is a set of practical steps for responding effectively to the Corona crisis, using the principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).  
[https://services.unimelb.edu.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/3332227/FACE-COVID.pdf](https://services.unimelb.edu.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/3332227/FACE-COVID.pdf)
- ✓ Reach out to a trusted friend, family member or see your medial professional if you need additional support.