

Mental health and wellbeing during the COVID-19 outbreak

The outbreak of the corona virus – COVID-19 has impacted people in varying ways. It is normal for adults and children to experience different emotions during this time. This may include increased pre-occupation with specific details related to Covid-19 in addition to increased anxiety, stress or worry within individual families and communities. It is particularly important that you take care of your mental health and wellbeing during this period.

Here are some strategies, tips and resources that could help you look after yourself and your families during this difficult period.

Be mindful of exposure to information through stories or social media as it can increase feelings of fear and anxiety. Limit your exposure to news and media. It is advised that you choose specific times of day when you will get updates, and ensure they are from reputable and reliable sources.

Reputable sources:

- Australian Department of Health – <https://www.health.gov.au/>
- Coronavirus Australia App (can be downloaded via the App Store or Google Play)
- Coronavirus Australia Whatsapp service
 - Download [WhatsApp](#) onto your phone.
 - Add the government's WhatsApp number into your WhatsApp contacts. The number is +61 400 253 787
 - Send the WhatsApp account a message.
 - You will receive a message back.
 - Follow the instructions to get the information you need
- World Health Organisation - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Strategies to cope with social distancing, self-isolation or quarantine

- Perspective – try to see this time as unique and different, not necessarily bad, even if it is something you didn't necessarily choose.
- Connection – It is important that you stay connected with other people through video call, phone call or other creative ways.
- Be generous to others – giving to others in times of need not only helps the recipient, it enhances your wellbeing too.
- Keep a gratitude journal – it can help you slow down and reflect on the things you are thankful for.
- Stay connected with your values. Don't let fear or anxiety drive your interactions with others.
- 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.

Strategies to manage anxiety and stress

FOUR CORE STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY

1. ATTENTION - CENTERING TECHNIQUES
To neutralize anxiety, it can often help to use techniques designed to focus attention beyond anxious thoughts.

MEDITATION BREATHING VISUALIZATION

2. EXPRESSIVE, CREATIVE STRATEGIES
To channel anxious thoughts or feelings in more productive ways, we might identify specific outlets to express creativity, such as working on a project, drawing, and athletics.

WORKING ON A PROJECT ARTS PHYSICAL MOVEMENT

3. REFLECTION EXPLORATION STRATEGIES
To monitor where anxiety arises, become more aware of anxiety triggers, and reflect on anxious thoughts and feelings, we might try strategies that foster self-observation.

JOURNALING SELF-MONITORING COMMUNICATION

4. HEALTHY LIFESTYLE VALUES
To reduce residual feelings of anxiety, it could help to turn attention toward healthy habits, healthy relationships, healthy pleasures, and a healthy environment.

NUTRITION RELATIONSHIPS EXERCISE

Adapted from Shelly Harrell, PhD

Grounding Exercise

For use during a panic attack, when you need to stay calm, or anytime you feel "disconnected" from your body.

Look around you. Identify + name:

5 things you **see**
4 things you **feel**
3 things you **hear**
2 things you **smell**
1 thing you **taste**

puzzlepeacecounseling.com

When and where to get support?

All Redeemer Lutheran College staff have access to free counselling sessions through AccessEAP: <https://www.accesseap.com.au/> or call [1800 81 87 28](tel:1800818728) / [02 8247 9191](tel:0282479191)

If you ever feel unable to cope because of overwhelming or intense emotions, or if you have any thoughts of harming yourself, then seek help immediately.

National 24/7 crisis services

- Lifeline: 13 11 14 or <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>
- Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467 or <https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>
- Beyondblue: 1300 224 636 or <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Additional youth support services

- Headspace: <https://headspace.org.au/>
- Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 or <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
- ReachOut: <https://au.reachout.com/>
- SANE Australia: 1800 187 263 or <https://www.sane.org/>

The World Health Organisation has developed a flyer on [Helping children cope with stress during the Covid-19 outbreak](#)

Raising children website <https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia> also has information for families.

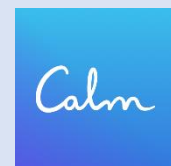
Headspace has developed [7 tips for a healthy headspace](#) to help people create and maintain a healthy headspace.

Other resources:

<https://mentalwellbeing.initiatives.qld.gov.au/support>

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Some apps you can install on your phone to help during this period.



Whoever dwells in the
shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of
the Almighty. I will say of
the Lord, "He is my refuge
and my fortress, my God,
in whom I trust."

Psalm 91:1-2