
COVID-19

Taking care of yourself and others

Blue Knot Foundation fact sheet for everyone in the community

Looking after yourself and those you care about in uncertain times...

Grappling with Coronavirus is undoubtedly a challenging time for us all. This is as individuals, communities, countries, and globally. While the sense of uncertainty and threat can be hard for anyone, it can be particularly hard for people who are already living with the effects of previous traumas and anxiety. That's why it's important for us to do what we can to look after ourselves, those we care about, and our communities. We also need to support one another to stay as regulated and emotionally grounded as possible, and to walk alongside one another through this difficult time as much as we can.

We understand that this is easier said than done. But we also have very recent experiences of ourselves and our fellow Australians doing just that. During the recent bushfires and the flash flooding which followed, we saw communities, and indeed the whole country, unite with a common sense of purpose. That purpose was to help and support our fellow Australians. We saw the best of the human spirit - despite and during adversity, people showing remarkable courage and compassion to pull together to help rebuild a safe cohesive community. It was a time of resilience and

recovery, with the fresh growth we've seen literally sprouting around us and the hope this embodies.

Already now we are seeing some incredible efforts from our health and community services. This is as they seek to guide and support us, and as we all try to understand and practise the best ways to stay and be safe and well.



1 Media and social media

As always, the media plays a critical role in keeping us informed. However, the flip side of this is that we are subjected 24x7 to a constant barrage of information. Some of this information is considered and some less so. It is also the case that there are simply some things about Coronavirus that no-one knows. Not knowing is hard and can fuel further anxiety. But the good news is that the world's scientists are collaborating on an unprecedented scale. This means extraordinary ongoing efforts to study the virus, how to contain it and its impacts, and 'round the clock' work towards a vaccine and treatments for the future.

During this time, it is important for us all to stay informed. But limiting our exposure to social media and some media platforms may be advisable. This particularly applies to media which is opinion rather than fact, which may not be trustworthy, and which can additionally fuel our existing anxiety, distress, and the risk of overwhelm.

2 Looking after yourself

As always, and even more so during these times, it's important to focus on the activities and daily routines which help support feelings of wellbeing. Although some familiar practices may need to be varied during this period, as well as self-isolation or other imposed restrictions the following will be helpful:

- getting as much restorative sleep as possible
- eating well
- exercising to keep healthy
- doing things that are enjoyable – being creative and always safe as circumstances change
- keeping informed from credible sources (resist being bombarded with anxiety-provoking misinformation)
- making a plan e.g. if quarantine is necessary for how to stay healthy and connected
- regularly practising strategies to self-soothe
- which minimise extra use of medication, alcohol and drugs as much as possible
- staying connected in safe ways with friends, family and other support networks
- reaching out in safe ways for help and support as public health advice changes

It is understandable to feel concerned during this time. Current anxiety can also trigger strong feelings and memories of previous traumas. It can be a time when additional support may be needed. If you or someone you care about would like to speak to one of our specialist trauma counsellors please call the Blue Knot Helpline on 1300 657 380 between 9am - 5pm Monday to Sunday AEST. For more information about how to care for yourself see <https://www.blueknot.org.au/For-Survivors/Survivor-self-care>

Here is some general advice to help prevent the spread of coronavirus

Practising good hand and sneeze/cough hygiene is the best defence against most viruses:

- wash your hands frequently with soap and water, before and after eating, and after going to the toilet
- cover your cough and sneeze, dispose of tissues, and use alcohol-based hand sanitiser
- if unwell, avoid contact with others (stay more than 1.5 metres from people)

3 More Information

For the latest advice, information and resources, go to www.health.gov.au

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The phone number of your state or territory public health agency is available at www.health.gov.au/state-territory-contacts If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.

As an alternative to the helplines, answers to many questions are available on the [healthdirect website coronavirus hub](#). This is a first point of reference for reliable information about COVID-19. The [healthdirect Symptom Checker](#) provides self-guided triage to find out what to do next. This is a first point of reference for reliable information about COVID-19.