

## Looking after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak



As the Coronavirus continues to spread, many people are naturally fearful for their health, their livelihoods and those they care for. During times of great uncertainty, it's natural to be anxious however it's also important to keep things in perspective.

In this time of crisis, it's important to remember that medical professionals and infectious disease experts are working hard with public service officials to bring the pandemic under control, treat those affected and develop a vaccine as soon as possible.

In saying that, loss of income and job insecurity are very real problems and the Government has announced new measures for those affected. Should you find yourself in this situation please visit the Services Australia website ([www.servicesaustralia.gov.au](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au)) for assistance.

The sheer volume of negative coverage in the mainstream media can be overwhelming leading to heightened anxiety, depression or feelings of panic. While it is important to remain informed, you may find it beneficial to limit your exposure to the mainstream media at this time if it is troubling you or those you care for.

It's only natural to want to turn on the TV or search the web to get the latest coronavirus news. However, too much negative coverage can be overwhelming and simply cause more stress and anxiety.



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Should you find yourself in a situation where you need to self-isolate for 14 days (or longer) there are a number of strategies you can adopt to support your mental wellbeing:

- Stay connected with friends, family members and colleagues via social media, email, video conferencing and phone.
- Remind yourself that this is a temporary period of isolation necessary to limit the spread of the virus. You are doing your bit for the community and those you care for.
- Try to get some exercise. Maintain a regular routine and choose healthy food options.
- If you are working from home, try to set up a dedicated workspace, take regular breaks and stick to your normal working hours.
- Avoid the mainstream media if you find it distressing.

If you are caring for young children, try to address their concerns about the virus in an open and honest way. Try to explain the situation calmly and in a manner that is appropriate to their age and temperament. It's important to listen to their concerns, address any questions they may have, and to let them know they are safe and that it's normal to feel worried in times like these.

If you are concerned about your own mental health, or if you are worried about the mental wellbeing of someone you care for, support is available from Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.