



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,  
Regional Development and Communications



CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

# Managing Stress and Anxiety



## Overview

Common reactions

Why do we react this way?

Coping with stress and anxiety.

Staying Connected

Staying Informed

Reaching Out

Financial Stress

## Common Reactions

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic keeps unfolding, it's normal for us to experience a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions.

Common reactions include:

Feeling stressed or overwhelmed.

Having racing thoughts and an underlying sense of panic.

Sadness, tearfulness, loss of interest in things we usual enjoy.

Physical symptoms, such as increased heart rate, stomach upset, fatigue, or other uncomfortable sensations.

Frustration, irritability, or anger.

Restlessness or agitation.

Feeling helpless.

Difficulty concentrating or sleeping.

Feeling disconnected from others

Trouble relaxing



# Why do we react this way?

People are most comfortable when we can make reasonable predictions about what is going to happen in our lives.

However, at the moment there is a lot of uncertainty. It is a natural reaction for people to try and plan but this is becoming increasingly difficult because we are experiencing rapid changes to our way of life (e.g., study, work, social gatherings). We are experiencing disrupted plans due to travel restrictions and social (physical) distancing measures in our efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19 .

When we cannot plan with any certainty it is not uncommon to experience stress or anxiety. This is why we have to actively take steps to look after our mental health and well-being, as well as our physical health.



# Strategies for coping with stress and anxiety

When we are experiencing uncertainty or things being out of our control, one of the most effective ways we can manage stress and anxiety is to focus on the actions that are in our control.

One way to take control is to acknowledge your feelings. Whatever you are feeling right now, know that it's okay to feel that way. There are lots of ways to allow yourself to notice your feelings. You might like to write them down in a journal, talk to others, or do something creative or practical like make something or fix something.

Lots of people have found mindfulness meditation to be a helpful way to deal with stress and anxiety. There are some links included later in this booklet to mindfulness apps.

Routine becomes very important to help people feel grounded and having a sense of control. Try hard to maintain your day-to-day activities and a routine as much as possible, especially if you are in isolation. Having a healthy routine can have a positive impact on your thoughts and feelings - comes back to having that sense of control over your life.

Go back to basics: eating healthy meals, physical exercise (e.g., walking, stretching, running, cycling), getting enough sleep, and doing things you enjoy. Even if you're in self-isolation, or working from home, there are many ways to develop new routines and stay healthy.

When we lose choices about what we can and cannot do it is very natural for our minds to focus on what we can't do. However, we can make conscious decisions to focus on the activities we are still able to do, or those that we may have more opportunity to do if we're at home more often. This might be reading a book, doing an online course, listening to a podcast, practising a forgotten skill.



# Staying Connected

It is important in these uncertain times in which we have to socially distance and sometimes isolate ourselves from others that we stay connected. This means staying connected

- to the here and now
- to ourselves,
- with our communities
- with our loved ones

## ALLOW PEOPLE TO HELP

Receiving support and care from others has a powerful effect on helping us cope with challenges.

## SPEND TIME WITH FAMILY/FRIENDS

Spending time with supportive family and friends can bring a sense of comfort and stability.

## TALK TO SOMEONE

Talking through our concerns, thoughts, and feelings with others can also help us find helpful ways of thinking about or dealing with a stressful situation.

## USE TECHNOLOGY

Call, text, or video-chat with friends and family. Start a virtual book or movie club. Schedule a workout together over video chat. Join an online group or peer forum.

# Staying Informed

## AND KNOWING WHEN TO SWITCH OFF

### Seek accurate information

There is a lot of information circulating, especially on social media, that isn't very accurate or helpful. When you choose to find out what is happening in the world at the moment use the following places:

Australian Department of Health,  
Australian Department of Education, Skills, and  
Employment  
The Administrators Bulletins  
Information from the Territory Controller  
World Health Organization

Set limits around news and other media.

It's understandable to want to keep informed and prepared. At the same time, constantly reading, watching, or listening to upsetting media coverage can unnecessarily intensify worry and agitation.

When you get the urge to check updates, see if you can pause, notice the urge, delay acting on the urge, and let it pass without judgement.

Try to schedule a specific time to check in with the news instead.

It's also okay to take breaks from conversations with others about COVID-19 and suggest talking about other topics. You never know, perhaps you are doing them a favour and helping them to talk about something else.

# Reaching Out

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

## GETTING HELP EARLY

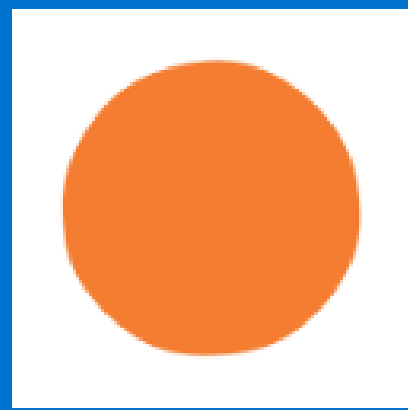
Sometimes it can be hard to reach out for help at first but getting help early can often mean less anxiety more quickly.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

People are often concerned about confidentiality but you do not need to be. There are a range of services that you can contact depending on what makes you most comfortable.

## MODES OF SUPPORT

The next few pages outline online, telephone and in person support services that you could access.



# Headspace

## HEADSPACE

Headspace is meditation made simple. The app takes you through the basics of meditation. Great for reducing anxiety and panic.



# The Check-in

## THE CHECK IN

The Check-in is for anyone who wants to check in with a friend but is concerned about saying the wrong thing or making the situation.

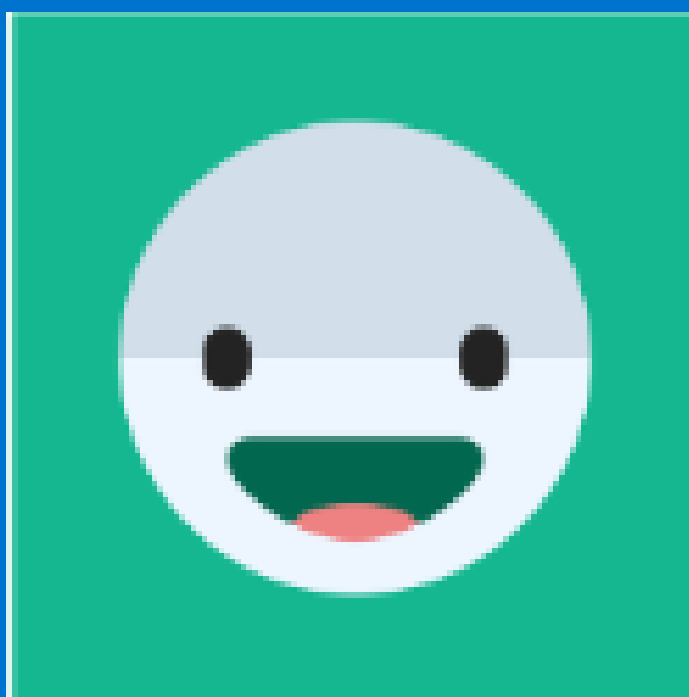


# SMILING. MIND

## SMILING MIND

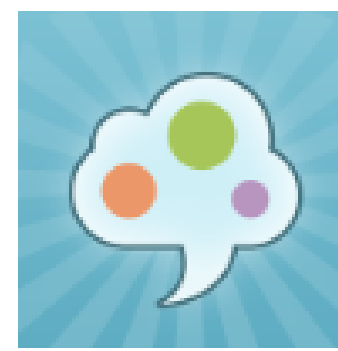
Smiling Mind is a unique tool developed by psychologists and educators to help bring balance to your life. Free mindfulness meditation app to help you look after your mental health and manage stress and daily challenges.





## DAYILO

Daylio is a diary app that allows for goal setting, mood tracking and routine notifications. Great for keeping routines in order.



## Self-help for Anxiety Management

## SELF-HELP FOR ANXIETY

This app has strategies that are useful for reducing anxiety and helping to manage stress.



## Chats For Life

## CHATS FOR LIFE

This app will help you to plan a conversation with someone that you may be concerned about, who may be struggling or not going well. Great for young people.

# Telephone Support Services

## CRISIS SUPPORT

Lifeline - provides crisis counselling and suicide prevention services. Phone: 13 11 14 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Lifeline online chat.

Suicide Call Back Service - provides online and phone counselling if you or someone you know is feeling suicidal. Phone: 1300 659 467. Suicide Call Back Service online chat.

## GENERAL COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT

Beyond Blue - online and phone mental health support. Phone: 1300 22 4636 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Beyond Blue online chat.

Headspace - confidential mental health and wellbeing support for young people (12 - 25 years) and their families, including information, support, and health services. Phone: 1800 650 890 (9am - 1am, 7 days a week).

MensLine - professional telephone and online support and information service for Australian men. Phone 1300 78 99 78 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

Mindspot - free telephone and online service for people with stress, worry, anxiety, low mood or depression. Call 1800 61 44 34 (8am - 8pm, Monday - Friday; 8am-6pm, Saturday).

# On Island Services

## TALK TO A HEALTH PROFESSIONAL

Feel free to speak to a nurse or a doctor at the IOTHS they will be able to help you or refer you to someone who can help.

CI - 08 9164 8333 CKI Home 9162 7609 West 9162 6655

## IOTHS SOCIAL WORKER

You can speak with the Community Social Worker based on Christmas Island in person, or by phone or through other electronic means.

Phone 08 9164 8333 ext 128 or text 0447 975 436

## CIDHS SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST

Contact your school if you would like to speak with the school psychologist if you have concerns about your children.



# Financial Concerns

**IF YOU'RE AFFECTED BY  
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19), YOU CAN  
REGISTER YOUR INTENTION TO  
CLAIM A CENTRELINK PAYMENT.**

You don't need to complete a full claim right now. You can register your intention to claim at a time and place that works for you. Centrelink will backdate your payment. You can register your intention to claim through myGov.

If you need help, contact your Centrelink agent on Island.

If you are experiencing financial hardship you can contact the Community Social Worker on  
08 9164 8333 or text 0447 975 436



# Take Care Of One Another

