

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

how to cope with stress related to COVID-19

It can feel stressful and overwhelming during an event like the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and we can all be affected differently.

You might feel overwhelmed by the information, conversations and the increased levels of stress in your community. It can be hard to know what information to trust especially in a situation where things are changing so quickly. It can be helpful to keep up-to-date but it's also okay to switch off from the 24 hour media cycle if this is getting too much.

During this time some things in your life may be affected by attempts to contain the spread of the virus. You may have been looking forward to a gig or a trip that's been cancelled. You may be affected by school, uni or your workplace temporarily closing. Or you may have a loved one who is directly affected by the virus.

It's important to find the right level or type of support for you. And keep in mind that the type of support you may need can change as time passes. For many people staying connected to family and friends/loved ones is important.

Tips to maintain a healthy headspace during this time

- 1** Be mindful of exposure to information through stories, traditional and social media. It can be helpful to take a break from the 24-hour news cycle
- 2** Do things that make you feel safe and connected, and be with those who are helpful to your wellbeing
- 3** Engage in activities that promote a sense of calm and feeling grounded (use of alcohol and other drugs can be counterproductive with this)
- 4** Our [7 tips for a healthy headspace](#) demonstrate simple and effective things that can help people to create and maintain a healthy headspace, irrespective of whether they have been affected by COVID-19 or not
- 5** It can help to talk with a trusted adult if it all feels a bit much.

Please note

The latest medical information is changing on a daily basis. If you suspect you are at risk, or would simply like to understand COVID-19 more, please visit the Department of Health's website.

health.gov.au

Common reactions

Fear and anxiety

At this time you might experience feelings of fear or anxiety. You might be worried about the virus and how it might affect you, your loved ones or your life.

Anger, frustration and confusion

It can be difficult to understand what to do in these situations because of the volume of different information available. This might feel confusing and frustrating, this is normal. Events like these can reduce the things we normally do in our days and that can seem unfair. This might make you feel frustrated or angry.

Sadness

If you've been asked to stay at home or stop your normal activities you might feel disconnected from important people or things in your life. This might make you feel sad or bored.

Denial

When bad things are happening, some people might prefer not to think about them at all. This might be helpful to start with, but our feelings can catch us by surprise later on. It's OK to distract yourself, but also find some time to think about what is happening and how you're going.

If you start to notice that you are experiencing these things, it is important to remember that these are normal reactions to a not normal time. During this time it is important as best as possible to keep engaged with the activities that support your wellbeing. You might need to get creative in how you continue to do them.

When should I get help?

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

National 24/7 crisis services

- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14 or lifeline.org.au
- **Suicide Call Back Service:** 1300 659 467 or suicidecallbackservice.org.au
- **beyondblue:** 1300 224 636 or beyondblue.org.au

Additional youth support services

- **headspace:** visit headspace.org.au for eheadspace or more information
- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au
- **ReachOut:** reachout.com
- **SANE Australia:** 1800 187 263 or sane.org

Talk with a trusted adult, such as a parent, teacher, school counsellor or find out if there is a headspace centre near you.

Speak to your local doctor or General Practitioner (GP) and help make a plan for your recovery. Or you can search for a health service and GP on healthdirect.



headspace