

NSW School- Link are currently working on creative and flexible ways of providing consultation, collaboration and capacity building to provide services and support children and young people living

with mental illness during the current COVID 19 pandemic. This is not a situation any of have experienced before and we share the feelings of stress and anxiety. Our focus is to stay safe but **connected**.

The current changes to how services are working due to social distancing strategies means that some people may be experiencing even more isolation and stress than usual. We are aware of the added strain carers and families may be experiencing if the usual supports are either limited or not currently available. The following are some supports available for families and carers.

### What to do when you're anxious about a pandemic

Make sure you get your info from reputable sources like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- Limit access to media to prevent feeling overwhelmed
- Focus on what you can control, e.g. practice good hygiene
- Know it's normal and ok to be concerned
- Give your thought patterns a 'reality check', e.g. if you get stuck in a 'thinking loop', think about something else, or reassure yourself
- Remind yourself to be in the present moment (anxiety is often focused in the future on 'what ifs')
- Seek support if needed
- Look after yourself
- Stay connected with family and friends

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### HNE Mental Health Services

Will continue to provide clinical services to consumers and families and carers with the following changes:

- Use of telehealth and video conferencing for face to face contact in community settings if appropriate to do so.
- Changes to visiting arrangements for inpatient units. Please and call and check local arrangements.

**All usual crisis pathways are available**

### What's your best coping strategy at the moment?

- Putting a fluffy jacket on and cuddling with a pet or watching baking videos
- Chocolate
- Staying active
- Keeping my mind on schoolwork
- Yoga
- Keep in touch with friends online
- Breathing slowly
- Going on YouTube and Instagram
- Turn off the news
- Setting goals and also using mindfulness colouring books
- Time with my dog and cooking
- Listening to music and writing about the experience of lockdown
- Hanging out with the fam
- Meditation helps me
- Try not to worry and enjoy the free time
- Probably art and drawing because creative is my style
- Staying in touch with friends and family and keeping each other motivated

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### YARN UP FEEL DEADLY

Yarn up Feel Deadly app includes a number of culturally considerate re-sources, powerful personal video testimonials, information regarding mental health conditions, treatments and medications and also details and information of upcoming community events. While the culturally appropriate app is designed to target Aboriginal communities, the content and links will benefit and be of interest to all.

Free app to download on apple and google play also can click on link for computer

Apple-<https://apps.apple.com/vg/app/yarn-up-feel-deadly/id1446222304>

Google play-  
[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bizbag.yarnup&hl=en\\_AU](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.bizbag.yarnup&hl=en_AU)

Computer  
<https://sportsbag.net.au/skoolbagapp/?schoolid=1957>



Provided by the department of Health, Head to Health brings together apps, online mental health, online resources, online programs, phone support and a range of other resources.

Provides support and resources for individuals, families and carers. There are over 500 online re-sources to access.

<https://headtohealth.gov.au/>

**Mental Health  
Carers ARAFMI Hunter  
Samaritans.org.au/arafmi  
Ph: 49221500**

**Email:**

**[brunker@samaritans.org.au](mailto:brunker@samaritans.org.au)  
Free professional counselling  
and support available**



**Mental Health Line  
1800 011 511  
For new referrals**



## COVID-19 Bulk Billed GP Telehealth Services

From 13 March 2020 to 30 September 2020, new temporary MBS telehealth items have been made available to help reduce the risk of community transmission of COVID-19 and provide protection for patients and health care providers. The new items are available to GPs, medical practitioners, nurse practitioners, participating midwives, allied and mental health providers. A service may only be provided by telehealth where it is safe and clinically appropriate to do so. The new temporary MBS telehealth items must be bulk billed.

**Who is eligible?** All Medicare cardholders are now eligible to access the new temporary MBS telehealth items for a range of consultations. The new temporary MBS telehealth items will be available until 30 September 2020.

**How do I make a telehealth appointment?** When making an appointment with your health professional, you could indicate that you would like your consultation performed via telehealth. Your health professional may also offer any of your existing appointments as a telehealth consultation.

**If you have any questions or need support please call and speak with the treating team.**



Carers can access information and support including up to 6 free counselling sessions via [www.carergateway.gov.au](http://www.carergateway.gov.au)

Carers are encouraged to stay up to date on the most current information relating to Coronavirus by visiting the Federal Department of Health web-site.

**Carer gateway contact centre 1800 422 737 Emergency Respite** – 1800 052 222 Mon – Fri-day 8am- 6pm; 1800 059 059 after hours

**Help and advice** – phone counselling, self-guided coaching, online carer forum, and skills courses

**Financial Help** – advice, options and information





The **NDIS** has made some changes to the plan review process in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Scheduled plan reviews** - NDIA will contact participants by phone or email to undertake reviews.

Participant and their family can now request 24-month plan instead of the usual 12-month plan.

**Current NDIS plans** - on the day a plan is due to expire, it will automatically be extended by 365 days.

**Services** - NDIA has increased financial support for registered providers so that they could be flexible and continue to provide support to participants through the COVID-19 pandemic.

**NDIS Contact Centre** -Call the Contact Centre on **1800 800 110**, Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm (local time). **Select option 5 for plan enquiries related to COVID-19.**



**Black Dog Institute**

Black Dog institute has put together some specific re-sourced to help you manage your own COVID-19 related anxiety. Everyone is finding life a little different and at times

anxiety provoking. Please head to [www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au) for some great tips and

## Stay informed....

It is really important to stay informed and have the most up to date and correct information for you and the person you care for to stay safe.

Stay up to date with our latest developments via HNE FB page [www.facebook.com/hnehealth/](https://www.facebook.com/hnehealth/) and [www.patientinfo.org.au](http://www.patientinfo.org.au)

Other reliable information sources:

**Australian Government Department of Health** [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

**healthdirect hotline** 1800 022 222 [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

**Coronavirus Health Information Line** 1800 020 080

strategies to manage any current stress and anxiety we are all experiencing.



**Health**



## Tips to manage self-isolation.

- **Maintain a normal daily routine as much as possible**
- **Make time for some exercise.**
- **Avoid or reduce the use of alcohol and tobacco.**
- **Stay connected with friends and family through social media and over the phone.**
- **Use your time purposefully, for example, working from home. Try to keep a daily structure.**
- **Take advantage of the time to do things that you've been wanting to do like reading a book**
- **Be kind to yourself– its ok to have days where you are not productive!**
- **Limit the news and social media if it is making you feel overwhelmed.**
- **Make use of You Tube for yoga and meditation or mindfulness activities.**
- **Watch a movie or show that makes you laugh!**

## What if the person I care for needs to Quarantine?

It may be a possibility that either you or the person you care for may need to be strictly isolate. This would be a stressful situation and is important to be prepared and develop a personal/family prepared-ness plan just in case.

### ***A few things to consider....***

- Do you or the person you care for have enough medication? If not do you have scripts to cover this time? If not– call your GP to arrange scripts and clarify if your chemist can deliver.
- Do you have someone as a back up to provide the support you normally provide?
- Are there key services that are currently providing support? Are they able to increase supports if needed?
  - Have a plan to minimise stress for you and the person you care for.
  - If you or the person you care for are in self- solation as directed, triaged and approved by Health, there are services that can assist with food, accommodation and other needs.
- Service NSW are able to take call from the community about these supports if you are in self-isolation directed by NSW Health. Please call 13 77 88 or visit the website

[www.service.nsw.gov.au/covid-19](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/covid-19)

## Keeping families' safe.....

Currently families will be feeling really stressed and overwhelmed. With the changes to schooling, work and how we socialise people are feeling the strain. The following are available for increased support

- NSW Domestic Violence line 1800 737 732
- Men's Line 1300 78 99 78
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Link2home for urgent accommodation 1800 152 152

## MANAGING ANXIETY DURING A PANDEMIC

- Everyone reacts differently, it is ok to feel stress, anxiety, worry or fear. Some practical ways to help if you are feeling overwhelmed:
- Channel your anxious energy into action- get in-formed, plan and prepare. Try to focus on what's under your control
- Limit or avoid unhelpful media and misinformation
- Cut down behaviours fuelling anxiety
- Stay focused on the here and now, taking each day step by step
- Be aware of unhelpful thoughts and don't give them too much power
- Look after your body- sleep, exercise & eat well
- Stay connected with others- try using skype or other new ways you haven't before
- Be kind and compassionate to others and yourself
- Take a breath, or try something else that helps you relax (walking, listening to music, a crossword etc.)
- Reach out and ask for help
- Remind yourself that this is not forever

## Talking to children.....

Your child is probably seeing and hearing a lot about coronavirus (COVID-19) on TV, radio, and social me-dia, as well as from other people. Talking with your child about coronavirus (COVID-19) can **help your child understand and cope** with what's going on

- Make time to talk
- Find out what they already know
- Explain in an age appropriate way
- Tune into their emotions and feelings– talk about feelings of anxiety being ok
- Its ok to not know the answer– look at resources together
- Manage your own feelings and worries

For more information and support check



**kidshelpline**  
Anytime Any Reason

**1800 55 1800**



**raisingchildren.net.au**