



A message from Coordinator-General Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing



9 April 2020

With Easter this coming weekend I wanted to take the opportunity to connect with you all. The last couple of weeks have been challenging with the new restrictions in place due to the spread of COVID-19 in Australia and in the ACT, and the change associated with this type of crisis on normal day-to-day routines.

We are in this together. If we continue to support one another with compassion and kindness we will get through this and we will be a stronger community as a result.

Maintaining your mental health and wellbeing during the holiday period is always important. This holiday period might not be the one you had planned given the current situation, or one that allows you to unwind in the ways you normally would. I encourage you to find some time this long weekend to connect online or by phone with family, friends, a neighbour, or to try something different.

To support you during the upcoming long weekend, here are some tips and resources to maintain your mental health and wellbeing.

- 1. Keep a healthy routine:** This is vital for you and your family members, to break up the day and avoid those 'long' days that some may be experiencing due to being at home.
- 2. Physical Activity:** This can be as simple as going for a walk or participating in an online activity. Physical activity remains as important as ever to help keep us healthy. Small increases in activity can have long term benefits for health and wellbeing. Being active, whether at home, work, during leisure time or getting to and from places, promotes a range of health benefits including your mental health, prevents chronic disease such as heart disease and diabetes, and helps to maintain healthy weight.
- 3. Maintain a healthy diet:** Be mindful to eat healthy nutritious food and avoid too many sweets (a little bit of chocolate from the Easter Bunny is of course fine).
- 4. Connect with family & friends:** Spend time with your family and loved ones (remotely where necessary) and enjoy each other's company. Have some fun and find some creative ways to engage with each other. There are some fabulous online activities and games to play. [Libraries ACT](#) offer free online services for families that can be accessed from home. To find out more about these great online programs and resources, join Libraries ACT online or visit their [At Home Brain & Boredom Busters list](#).
- 5. Sleep:** Try to maintain good sleeping habits as this will help support you during the day. Good sleep boosts your immune system and improves your mood.
- 6. Be kind to yourself and others:** The holidays can a difficult time for some people, and the current situation may contribute to this as we are not able to go away for the weekend or engage in normal rituals. Remember to be kind to yourself and others. You do not need to add additional pressure to yourself right now. Take this time to focus on you and your health, and of those around you.

Helpful Resources

Government websites:

- <https://health.act.gov.au/covid19mentalhealth>
- <https://headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/covid-19>

Other useful websites:

- <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/coronavirus-anxiety-resources>
- <https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/>

Children and Young People:

- <https://headspace.org.au/covid-19/>
- <https://au.reachout.com/collections/coping-during-coronavirus>
- <https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/>

Information for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples:

- <https://www.winninga.org.au/covid-19-coronavirus-precautions-for-winninga-clients/>
- <https://healthinonet.ecu.edu.au/learn/health-topics/infectious-conditions/covid-19-updates-and-information/>

My team will be developing a detailed Newsletter over the coming weeks with some additional resources and information to support our community through the current COVID-19 crisis.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank the frontline workers who are going above and beyond to support our community.

I would also like to wish you all a happy Easter and a safe long weekend at home with your loved ones. Thank you for your ongoing support. I look forward to continuing to work with you over the coming months as we support our community during this difficult time.