

Benalla P-12 College

Executive Principal - Tony Clark



A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRINCIPAL

COLLEGE VISION

BENALLA P-12 COLLEGE ENSURES THAT EVERY CHILD LEARNS AND IS PREPARED FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING, HIGH EXPECTATIONS AND POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS IN A SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

Dear Parents, Carers and Friends of the Benalla P-12 College Community,

Remote Learning

Unfortunately there have been some confusing messages from state and national leaders about schools and remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. At this stage we have no new advice from the DET about this, other than the Victorian State of Emergency will be reviewed on May 11.

This means that we will continue with the current arrangements where children who can learn from home must learn from home, and we will provide an on-site learning program for students who cannot be supervised at home.

Please remember that, on the advice of the Victorian Chief Health Officer, your child is safer at home and should only come to school when no other arrangements can be made.

Having said that, I want to congratulate you all on the amazing job you are all doing at home supporting your children in their remote learning. Hopefully you are developing a routine with your children and ensuring they are engaging with school work each and every day. Please contact your child's teachers or wellbeing staff if you have any questions or need any support.

ANZAC Day

I hope that students and families were able to commemorate ANZAC Day on Saturday to some extent. The importance of this day to local communities has been highlighted this year because of the restrictions on social gatherings. Our College Captains, Ed, Jessie, Isaac and Ebony all ensured the school was involved by making a short video to share with their peers and also posting photos of their dawn candlelight efforts online.

To me, ANZAC day is an important time to reflect on all those who have served and those who continue to serve in the Australian armed forces. To those families who have a loved one currently serving overseas. I hope that they are safe and well and you were able to connect with them somehow.

Technology and Internet Access

We are able to support families to access the internet at home by providing a dongle and sim card. At the moment we have a limited number of these and will be prioritising senior secondary students first then working our way through the rest of the school.

A Compass item went out earlier today explaining the process for this. If you have a child in Year 10-12 and need help connecting to the internet at home, you need to call the Faithfull Street office and make a time to meet with me to go over the loan agreement and conditions. Families with CSEF funding can use this to pay for the cost of the device and the data plan.

Our College Values

Respect

Responsibility

High Expectations

Integrity



TERM 2 DATES, TUES 14TH APRIL- FRI 26TH JUNE

PRINCIPALS MESSAGE CONTINUED.....

Getting through your day

School operates for 5 hours per day of lessons when students are on-site. Please remember that we do not expect you to get through that with your child. 2.5 – 3.5 hours per day of work is plenty to keep students engaged and learning. It is more about quality of work rather than quantity.

Also remember that school is about more than just academic learning. Playing outside, completing jobs and chores at home, doing daily exercise or playing a board game are valid activities that should form part of your daily routine at home.

Student Free Days

This coming Friday May 1st was initially planned to be a student free day. This has been changed to Friday June 5th. If we are still learning from home at that stage of the term, we will run it as a normal student free day with no on-site supervision or online classes.

Tony Clark

Executive Principal

THE WELLBEING TEAM SUPPORTING OUR FAMILIES

The Wellbeing Team would like you to know that we are here to support you in any way we can, even more so in this time of isolation with staying at home. If you are struggling and need food to help feed your family, please do not hesitate to contact your Wellbeing Support worker on your campus either by phone or by email.

Craig Carley -Senior Faithful Campus 5761 2777
carley.craig.c@edumail.vic.gov.au

Lou McCloskey- Faithful Campus 5761 2777
mccloskey.louise.h@edumail.vic.gov.au

Scott Greig -Avon Campus 57621646
Clarke Campus 5761 2752
Greig.scott.j@edumail.vic.gov.au

Bron Greig -Waller Campus 5762 2600
Greig.bronwyn.j@edumail.vic.gov.au



INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC LESSONS

Instrumental Music Lessons are still being taught via WebEx. Mr Roe, Mr Koren and Mr Roberts are all still working hard to give everyone the best opportunity to keep up with their music.



(Photo: Cheyane Vaughan Yr 11 receiving a lesson with Mr Roberts)

Audible Books

For as long as School is closed Audible are providing **Free** Audio Books for Kids. These stories are free to stream on your desktop, laptop, phone or tablet. Listen to the Tales of Beatrix Potter, Fun Songs or learn the Alphabet. Explore Literary Classics or Folk & Fairy Tales. You may be interested in listening to books like Anne of Green Gables or Harry Potter.

To access google [stories.audible.com](https://www.google.com/stories/audible.com)

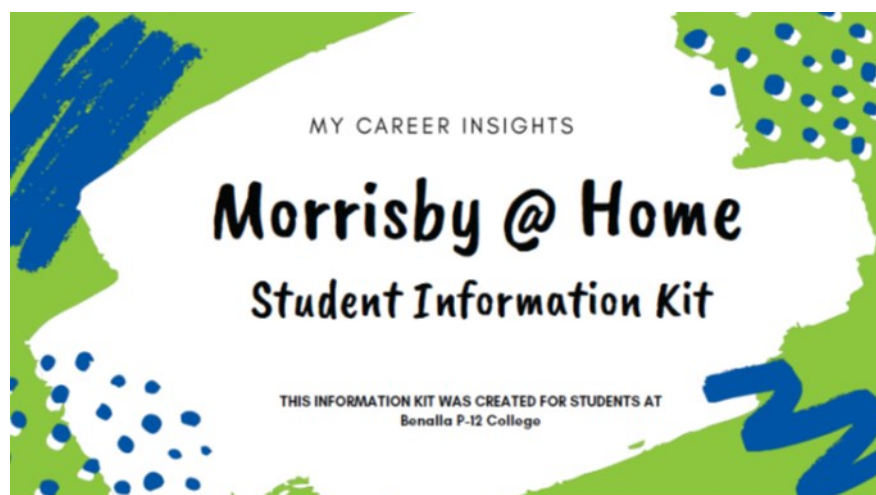
What is Morrisby? Year 9 students complete a series of on-line questions and quizzes designed to help students make better choices about subject selection, senior school certificates and pathways beyond secondary school.

What is the assessment like? Students are given 110 minutes to complete questions which assess their numerical, verbal, abstract, spatial and mechanical skills. They are also asked about their interests and personality. It's important to remember that this is not a test. Students must take their time to complete each task whilst being mindful of the timer.

Note to Parents and Carers Please return the **consent form** (found inside each student's Achievement Portfolio) to General Office as soon as possible. It is best that students complete this activity in a quiet area at home where they are not disturbed by others. They may have a break after each set of questions but it is recommended that they complete the assessment over 2 one-hour sessions. This should be done **before Friday 8 May**

More information? This is all contained in the Morrisby@ Home Student Information Kit. Please read carefully, **watch the YouTube clip** and **do some practice questions** before you start. There is a copy of this booklet inside each student's Achievement Portfolio and also in their Humanities Google classroom.

Please email me if you have any questions
oakley.susan.e@edumail.vic.gov.au
Sue Oakley (Pathways to Retention Coordinator)



With Sora, you can get free ebooks and audiobooks from your school.

- 1 Install the Sora app from the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, or go to soraapp.com.
- 2 In Sora, find your school (or enter your school's setup code), then sign in.
- 3 Browse the **Explore** tab and borrow a book. Your book will open so you can start reading right away.
- 4 Close the book and go to your **Shelf** to see all your books (including assignments). From there, you can:
 - Tap **Open Book** or **Open Audiobook** to read or listen to the book.
 - Tap **Options** to renew or return the book, get to your notes and highlights, and more.

Email: benalla.p12@edumail.vic.gov.au
Web: www.benallap12.vic.edu.au

Avon St

Yrs F-4

P: 035762 1646

Attendance Hotline
035762 1646

Waller St

Yrs F-4

P: 035762 2600

Attendance Hotline
035762 2600

Clarke St

Yrs 5-6 Hub

P: 035761 2752

Attendance Hotline
035761 2747

Faithfull St

Yrs 7-12

P: 035761 2777

Attendance Hotline
035761 2747



Maintaining your mental health during social isolation

To help control the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) across the country, all Australians have been asked to practise social distancing. In some cases people are required to, or may choose to, self-isolate. Understandably, the challenges associated with social distancing and isolation, including separation from loved ones, loss of freedom and reduced income, are leading some people to experience feelings of anxiety, boredom, frustration and fear.

This information sheet outlines some useful strategies you can use to maintain good mental health during this unprecedented time of social distancing and isolation.

Stay connected

Positive social connections are essential for our mental health and can help us cope in times of stress. In the current crisis, we are being asked to distance ourselves from others so it is important that we maintain our social networks using available methods of communication. This can be as simple as phoning a friend to share your experience, using videoconferencing technology to check in with a family member, or spending quality time with the people you live with.

Avoid difficult situations

At times, people will be required to self-isolate with others in their household. While this will provide opportunities for social connections, living with someone 24/7 with little or no time away from each other may give rise to arguments and/or tension. There are a number of things you can do to limit conflict with those you are isolated with, including:

- creating a roster to help you distribute chores equally and fairly
- identifying and taking part in activities you like doing together such as movies, board games, jigsaws, gardening
- sharing positive emotions and experiences, rather than anger, frustration and disappointment
- communicating about your worries and concerns, and seeking support from one another
- maintaining your sense of fun and positive humour
- remaining respectful of each other in times of conflict – walk away and take time to calm yourselves, returning to the discussion later and repairing any hurt caused.

Structure your day

While in isolation it is beneficial to plan out your days to restore a sense of purpose and normality to your daily life. Schedule tasks such as cooking and laundry, as well as activities you enjoy to help you stick to your routine. Structuring activities around mealtimes and bedtime can also help you keep to your schedule while ensuring you eat regularly and get enough sleep.

Given the current need to practise social distancing and isolation, many people are also being encouraged to work from home where possible. Working from home can bring a whole new set of challenges and the need to provide structure to your day is even more important.

The information in this tip sheet is current as at 20 March 2020.

Some tips to help you have a sense of normality and work effectively from home are listed below.

- **Change out of your pyjamas each morning** – While you don't have to dress as formally as you might when going into the office, getting out of your pyjamas can help you get in the right headspace to start your day.
- **Set up a dedicated workspace** – Choose a space away from noise and with adequate lighting to set up your work desk. If possible, use an adjustable desk chair so you can work comfortably. Visit Worksafe Victoria for tips on setting up a safe workspace (bit.ly/2Wr2vjL)
- **Set a strict schedule** – It can be hard to switch-off from work, so it is important to clearly define your working hours, ensuring you have regular breaks. Disconnect from all work-related accounts (e.g., remote desktops, email) at the end of your working day to help maintain a clear boundary between your work and home life.
- **Limit distractions** – Being at home can mean you can be easily distracted by other people or tasks (e.g., household chores). Schedule set times where you can take a break from work to complete these tasks, rather than completing them randomly throughout the day where you can lose track of time.
- **Keep in touch** – Maintain regular contact with your manager/colleagues (via phone, email or videoconferencing) to ensure you are each aware of your tasks, workload and timelines.

Tips to cope with self-isolation

Maintain a positive outlook during periods of self-isolation by:

- reminding yourself that this period of self-isolation is temporary
- thinking of the benefits of self-isolation to the wider society, including slowing the spread of the virus and protecting those most vulnerable in your community
- remaining mindful that medical and scientific experts are following strict protocols to contain the virus and treat those affected
- ensuring you have access to accurate, reliable and up-to-date information that communicates what is expected from you if you are in isolation
- maintaining relationships with family, friends and colleagues (e.g., via telephone or video technologies)
- not overusing social media as you are likely to be exposed to negative news and get drawn into doomsday discussions – try to keep your mind busy with activities you enjoy such as reading, watching movies, exercising and even spring-cleaning the house
- structuring your day when working from home – allocate specific work hours, schedule breaks and set-up a dedicated workspace where distractions are limited.

Helping your child through self-isolation

While most schools in Australia have not yet closed as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, many children are spending significantly more time at home, not taking part in out-of-school activities, and some are even required to self-isolate with their families. Below are some ideas on how parents can help their child cope with periods of social distancing or isolation.

- **Set a daily routine** – Routines can help children cope with change and help them understand what is expected of them. Work with your child to develop a routine that suits the whole family and includes a range of activities, for example,

schoolwork (literacy and numeracy), physical activity, creative play, family time and limited amounts of screen time.

- **Maintain social relationships** – Use technologies (such as FaceTime, Zoom or Skype) to help your child maintain contact with friends and other family members, such as grandparents. For older children and teenagers, it is important to monitor their use of social media accounts as excessive use can lead to increased levels of anxiety.
- **Have fun** – For many children, their out of school activities (e.g., swimming, football) have been cancelled but it is important for them to stay active. Harness their interests and have fun with them at home (e.g., play cricket in the backyard or dance to music inside). You can also take this opportunity to spend quality time with your child by teaching them a new skill or game, read with them, or research a new topic together.

Seek additional support when needed

If you feel that the stress or anxiety you experience as a result of self-isolation is getting too much, a psychologist may be able to help.

Psychologists are highly trained and qualified professionals skilled in providing effective interventions for a range of mental health concerns, including stress. A psychologist can help you manage your stress and anxiety using techniques based on the best available research.

If you are referred to a psychologist by your GP, you might be eligible for a Medicare rebate. You may also be eligible to receive psychology services via telehealth so that you do not need to travel to see a psychologist. Ask your psychologist or GP for details.

There are number of ways to access a psychologist. You can:

- use the Australia-wide [Find a Psychologist™](https://findapsychologist.com.au) service. Go to findapsychologist.com.au or call 1800 333 497
- ask your GP or another health professional to refer you.

More information

Australian Government Department of Health

The Department of Health has developed a collection of resources for the general public, health professionals and industry about coronavirus (COVID-19), including translated resources. bit.ly/380OwHe

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides reliable information about the coronavirus such as its symptoms, steps you can take to protect yourself, and what to do if you are affected. bit.ly/39MEml8

World Health Organization

The World Health Organization provides information and guidance regarding the current outbreak of coronavirus disease. bit.ly/3cQUwCw

The Australian Psychological Society Limited
PO Box 38, Flinders Lane, VIC, 8009
Telephone: (03) 8662 3300 or 1800 333 497
Fax: (03) 9663 6177
Email: membership@psychology.org.au
Web: psychology.org.au

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headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

Tips for a healthy headspace



There are a number of ways you can look after your mental health and wellbeing every day...

Get informed

Understanding more about what you're going through is an important first step. Information to help you make good decisions about relationships, school, finances and seeking help is available in a number of ways. Read pamphlets, articles or fact sheets, listen to podcasts, talk to or watch videos about others who have had similar experiences, read trusted websites for information, or ask a trusted adult for advice.



Sleep well



Getting a good night's sleep helps you feel energised, focused and motivated. Adolescence is a time when a number of changes to the "body clock" impact on sleeping patterns and you are more likely to have problems with sleep. Developing a sleeping routine can help you sleep much better. To do this try to wake up around the same time each day, get out of bed when you wake up, and go to bed around the same time each night. Avoiding caffeine after lunchtime, having a quiet, dark and uncluttered bedroom and shutting down your phone, laptop and other electronic devices before bed can also help you get a good night's sleep.

Eat well

Eating well doesn't only reduce the risk of physical health problems, like heart disease and diabetes, but it can also help with your sleeping patterns, energy levels, and your general health and wellbeing. You might have noticed that your mood can affect your appetite and food intake. A good balanced diet with less of the bad things (e.g. junk food and lots of sugars) and more of the good things (e.g. vegies, fruit, whole grains and plenty of water) will make sure you have all of the vitamins and minerals to help your body and brain function well.



Physical activity

Physical activity is important for everyone's health and wellbeing. If you're feeling down or finding things are difficult, physical activity may be the last thing you feel like doing. But even small activities like walking around the block can help relieve stress and frustration, provide a good distraction from your thoughts, help you concentrate and can help you look and feel better. Find a physical activity that you enjoy (e.g. swimming, playing sports with friends or cycling) and make a plan to do it regularly.



Set realistic goals

Setting realistic goals can help you to work towards a healthy headspace. Small, realistic goals can be a great way to work towards feeling well – everyone has to start somewhere. Work towards eating well, getting more active, sleeping better and also think about working towards long-term life goals. Setting and achieving realistic goals can be incredibly motivating and can help build self-confidence.



Build strategies

We all have coping strategies – some good, some not so good (e.g. using drugs and alcohol). There are various positive coping strategies you can try; exercise, relaxation techniques, talking to someone, writing or art. Experiment with what works best for you.



Reduce harmful effects of alcohol and drug use

Some people make the mistake of thinking that taking drugs and/or alcohol can help get them through tough times. While it may help people to cope temporarily, drugs and alcohol are one of the leading causes of harm to Australian young people and can contribute to, or trigger, mental health problems over time. Being responsible and reducing your use can improve your health and wellbeing.



Tips for a healthy headspace



Change your self-talk

Self-talk is the way that you talk to yourself, that voice inside your head. It can be positive (e.g. "I can make it through this exam") or negative (e.g. "I'm never going to be able to pass this subject"). There are a number of things you can do to change the direction of your self-talk. First, listen to your inner voice – is your self-talk helping you or reinforcing bad feelings? Next, try to replace your negative thoughts with more realistic ones. Try to look for a more rational spin on your situation or think of strategies to tackle your problems, rather than giving up hope. By working on your self-talk the more you'll feel confident and in control of yourself.



Develop assertiveness skills

Being assertive means standing up for your own rights; valuing yourself and valuing others' opinions without letting them dominate you. This can help build your self-esteem and self-respect. Being assertive is not the same as being aggressive. Remember to always listen, be prepared to compromise and be respectful of the other person's opinion, while still being confident, calm and knowing what you want.

Relax

There are many ways to relax and different relaxation techniques to use to overcome stress. Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing and relaxing specific groups of muscles from your feet all the way to your head, while focussing on your feelings of tension and relaxation. You could also try breathing techniques, such as deep breathing or focussed breathing (breathing in through the nose and as you breathe out say a positive statement to yourself like 'relax' or 'calm down'). Place a hand over your diaphragm to make sure you're breathing slowly – you should feel your hand move if you're doing it right. Focus on breathing in slowly for 4 seconds, holding your breath for 2 seconds and breathing out slowly for 6 seconds.



Practice conflict resolution

Having a hard time with friends or family is difficult for most people. Talking through the issues in a calm and thoughtful way is the best approach. Avoid getting personal, be willing to compromise and listen to their perspective.



Help and be kind to others

Do something to help someone else. Acts of kindness help other people but also make you feel good. Give a compliment, offer to help someone out or volunteer either on a once-off project or an ongoing basis and allow yourself to feel good for making someone else feel good.

Be socially active and get involved

Social relationships are really important to your general wellbeing. It is okay to take time out for yourself but friends can provide support when you're having a tough time. Spending time with friends is also really important for keeping and building on existing friendships. Getting involved with volunteer work, hobbies, clubs or committees, or sports can help you feel connected to your wider community while also meeting new people. If you're not feeling up to going out, even a phone call, email, text message or Facebook message can help us feel connected to friends and family.

Play



Play is important for staying mentally healthy. Devoting time to just having fun can recharge your battery, revitalise your social networks, and reduce stress and anxiety.

Seek help



A problem can sometimes be too hard to solve alone, even with support from friends and family. Be honest with yourself about when you may need support and get professional help. You can see your general practitioner (GP), make an appointment to chat to someone at your local **headspace** centre or visit **eheadspace.org.au**. Finding help might feel scary at the start but it gets easier over time. Getting support can help you to keep on track with school, study or work, and in your personal and family relationships. The sooner you get help the sooner things can begin to improve for you.



headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation

For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre or for online and telephone support, visit **headspace.org.au**

INSIGHTS

Helping siblings resolve their fights



With family members living in close proximity during the current COVID-19 pandemic, parents may find an increase in sibling squabbles. This is understandable as any relationship is tested to its limits by excess time and lack of space. Sibling squabbles usually arise over low level issues such as space (“He’s sitting in my seat.”), possessions (“That’s my book!”) and fairness (“It’s not fair. I was here first!”). It’s enough to send most parents around the twist.

While it seems that kids in families are programmed to fight with each other, the good news is that parents have the power to facilitate learning.

According to a recent study, sibling fights teach kids important conflict resolution skills. In fact, parents who stop their children from arguing may well be depriving them of important learning opportunities. Researcher Laurie Kramer from the University of Illinois in the US found that kids who learned how to argue with their siblings had more advanced emotional development.

Many parents also worry that their children who fight with each other will not get along as adults. The evidence doesn’t support this view. The test for strong families is more about the willingness for kids to pull together when the chips are down, rather than the frequency of the squabbling.

Healthy families know how to fight well. When parents take an active approach to helping their children resolve their fights, they are teaching them a valuable life skill as well as reducing the incidence of fighting over the long term. Here are some practical strategies to use:

Model good conflict resolution skills

Kids wear L plates when it comes to solving disputes. Some kids will yell, get abusive or even get physical when they are settling disputes. Show them better ways of sorting out problems by talking things through with your partner, compromising and apologising when you’ve said something upsetting to your partner or your children.

Help kids manage their emotions

“Yep, it would make me mad too if someone said that to me.” Usually someone’s feelings get hurt when siblings argue so make sure you recognise their emotions without taking sides. This focus on feelings helps kids develop emotional literacy and promotes empathy in siblings as well.

Monitor sibling relationships

Keep your antenna up for the signs of discord within sibling relationships. Some disputes kids can sort out themselves, but you need to be ready to intervene and assist kids in the peace-brokering, or at least to act as a safety net when one child continually appears on the wrong end of a power imbalance.

Mentor them to sort out disputes

Kids need the chance to sort their conflict out themselves, but sometimes they need a little coaching. They often invite their parents to take sides, which is usually counter-productive. Rather than trying to sort out who started an argument, focus on possible solutions, provide suggestions such as taking turns, giving way, bargaining, swapping or even walking away.

Encourage them to make up

Kids often get over disputes far quicker than adults. They can be squabbling one minute and cuddling up the next, so it gets tricky intervening sometimes. However there are times when you need to encourage a child to mend bridges with an aggrieved sibling. This can mean kids have to swallow their pride, admit that they may be wrong, make an apology or make some sort of restitution such as doing a special favour. This type of restoration means kids must take responsibility for their behaviours and is a sign of growing maturity.

Conflict and siblings tend to go together. While sibling squabbles can be annoying, they also offer parents great opportunities to help kids to handle conflict effectively, which is a great life skill.

Related webinar

Our school has a membership with Parenting Ideas. As part of this membership, you can access the below webinar recording 'Sibling Fighting' at no cost.

Spend an hour with renowned parenting educator Michael Grose as he explores the weird and wonderful world of sibling relationships. He'll help you develop an active approach to resolving sibling disputes so they learn valuable life skills.

To redeem:

1. Click this link: <https://www.parentingideas.com.au/parent-resources/parent-webinars/sibling-fighting-what-to-do>
2. Click 'Add to cart'
3. Click 'View cart'
4. Enter the voucher code HARMONY and click 'Apply.' The \$37 discount will then be applied
5. Click 'Proceed to checkout'
6. Fill in your account details including our school's name to verify your eligibility. These are the details you will use to login to your account and access your webinar and resources
7. Click 'Place Order'

This voucher is valid until 5 May 2020.



Michael Grose

Michael Grose, founder of Parenting Ideas, is one of Australia's leading parenting educators. He's an award-winning speaker and the author of 12 books for parents including *Spoonfed Generation*, and the bestselling *Why First Borns Rule the World and Last Borns Want to Change It*. Michael is a former teacher with 15 years experience, and has 30 years experience in parenting education. He also holds a Master of Educational Studies from Monash University specialising in parenting education.



Tips for coping with coronavirus anxiety

As the number of coronavirus cases rise across Australia, the level of anxiety within the community is increasing.

Feelings of worry and unease can be expected following a stressful event, such as the recent declaration of a global pandemic, however, it is important that we learn to manage our stress before it turns to more severe anxiety and panic.

This information sheet outlines some useful strategies which can help both adults and children cope with the stress or anxiety experienced as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

Learn the facts

Constant media coverage about the coronavirus can keep us in a heightened state of anxiety. Try to limit related media exposure and instead seek out factual information from reliable sources such as the Australian Government's [health alert](#) or other trusted organisations such as the [World Health Organization](#).

Keep things in perspective

When we are stressed, it is easy to see things as worse than they really are. Rather than imagining the worst-case scenario and worrying about it, ask yourself:

- *Am I getting ahead of myself, assuming something bad will happen when I really don't know the outcome?* Remind yourself that the actual number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in Australia is extremely low.
- *Am I overestimating how bad the consequences will be?* Remember, illness due to coronavirus infection is usually mild and most people recover without needing specialised treatment.
- *Am I underestimating my ability to cope?* Sometimes thinking about how you would cope, even if the worst were to happen, can help you put things into perspective.

Take reasonable precautions

Being proactive by following basic hygiene principles can keep your anxiety at bay. The World Health Organization recommends a number of protective measures against the coronavirus, including to:

- wash your hands frequently
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- stay at home if you begin to feel unwell until you fully recover
- seek medical care early if you have a fever, cough or experience breathing difficulties.

Practise self-care

To help encourage a positive frame of mind, it is important to look after yourself. Everybody practises self-care differently with some examples including:

- maintaining good social connections and communicating openly with family and friends
- making time for activities and hobbies you enjoy
- keeping up a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, getting quality sleep and avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to cope with stress
- practising relaxation, meditation and mindfulness to give your body a chance to settle and readjust to a calm state.

Tips for talking with children about the coronavirus

Children will inevitably pick up on the concerns and anxiety of others, whether this be through listening and observing what is happening at home or at school. It is important that they can speak to you about their own concerns.

Answer their questions

Do not be afraid to talk about the coronavirus with children. Given the extensive media coverage and the increasing number of people wearing face masks in public, it is not surprising that some children are already aware of the virus.

Providing opportunities to answer their questions in an honest and age-appropriate way can help reduce any anxiety they may be experiencing. You can do this by:

- speaking to them about coronavirus in a calm manner
- asking them what they already know about the virus so you can clarify any misunderstandings they may have
- letting them know that it is normal to experience some anxiety when new and stressful situations arise
- giving them a sense of control by explaining what they can do to stay safe (e.g., wash their hands regularly, stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing)
- not overwhelming them with unnecessary information (e.g., death rates) as this can increase their anxiety
- reassure them that coronavirus is less common and severe in children compared to adults
- allowing regular contact (e.g., by phone) with people they may worry about, such as grandparents, to reassure them that they are okay.

Talk about how they are feeling

Explain to your child that it is normal to feel worried about getting sick. Listen to your child's concerns and reassure them that you are there to help them with whatever may arise in the future.

It is important to model calmness when discussing the coronavirus with children and not alarm them with any concerns you may have about it. Children will look to you for cues on how to manage their own worries so it is important to stay calm and manage your own anxieties before bringing up the subject with them and answering their questions.

Limit media exposure

It is important to monitor children's exposure to media reports about the coronavirus as frequent exposure can increase their level of fear and anxiety. Try to be with your child when they are watching, listening or reading the news so you are able to address any questions or concerns they may have.

Seek additional support when needed

If you feel that the stress or anxiety you or your child experience as a result of the coronavirus is impacting on everyday life, a psychologist may be able to help.

Psychologists are highly trained and qualified professionals, skilled in providing effective interventions for a range of mental health concerns, including stress. A psychologist can help you manage your stress and anxiety using techniques based on the best available research.

If you are referred to a psychologist by your GP, you might be eligible for a Medicare rebate. You may also be eligible to receive psychology services via telehealth so that you do not need to travel to see a psychologist. Ask your psychologist or GP for details.

There are number of ways to access a psychologist. You can:

- use the Australia-wide Find a Psychologist™ service. Go to findapsychologist.com.au or call 1800 333 497
- ask your GP or another health professional to refer you.

More information

Australian Government Department of Health

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<https://bit.ly/38OOWHe>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides reliable information about the coronavirus such as its symptoms, steps you can take to protect yourself, and what to do if you are affected.



<https://bit.ly/39MEml8>

World Health Organization

The World Health Organization provides information and guidance regarding the current outbreak of coronavirus disease.

<https://bit.ly/3cQUwCw>

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PO Box 38, Flinders Lane, VIC, 8009
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