

COVID-19

Wellbeing Information Pack



City of
Newcastle



Looking after yourself during an infectious disease outbreak, like coronavirus (COVID-19).

Keeping ourselves and our friends and families healthy and well is at the top of many minds right now as COVID-19 continues to generate an impact on all of us.

This uncertain time in our life can feel scary, overwhelming and for some of us quite isolating.

The purpose of this information pack is to support the general health and wellbeing of the community and help connect people to the services they might need.

Please feel free to share with your family and friends if you think they will find the information useful.

Above all, if you are struggling and need additional support reach out to someone. You will find many support services throughout this information pack. And If someone tells you they are struggling, use the Wellbeing Information pack to let them know what help is available – **Let's support each other.**

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Looking after your Social Wellbeing

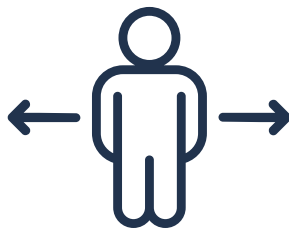
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Protect yourself & others



Washing your hands is one of the simplest, yet most effective, things you can do to protect your health and the health of others.

- Wash your hands regularly in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds – or use an alcohol-based hand rub if soap isn't available
- Avoid touching your face and mouth while out in public



To avoid infection, avoid contact with someone with [COVID-19](#) and apply rules of social distancing

Social distancing includes:

- avoiding crowds and mass gatherings where it is hard to keep a reasonable distance from others (about 1.5 metres)
- avoiding small gatherings in enclosed spaces
- keeping 1.5 metres between you and other people, where possible
- not shaking hands, hugging or kissing
- not visiting vulnerable people, such as those in aged-care facilities or hospitals, babies or people with weakened immune systems



Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue (and dispose of it straight away) or use the inside of your elbow (and immediately wash your hands)



You can also download the COVIDSafe App – developed to help speed up the process of contacting people exposed to COVID19.

[Watch this video](#) to understand how the app works.

Download the COVIDSafe App on:



During these challenging times, it's crucial that vulnerable Australians continue to get their important medication.

The [Pharmacy Home Delivery service](#) allows vulnerable members of the community to get free delivery of medications and other essential supplies (under 500grams), once a month.

Speak to your local pharmacy to arrange having medication delivered to you via Australia Post.



Feeling unwell?

[Healthdirect](#) have developed an online tool which allows you to answer questions about your symptoms to see if you need to seek medical help or get tested. This tool is available online at any time.

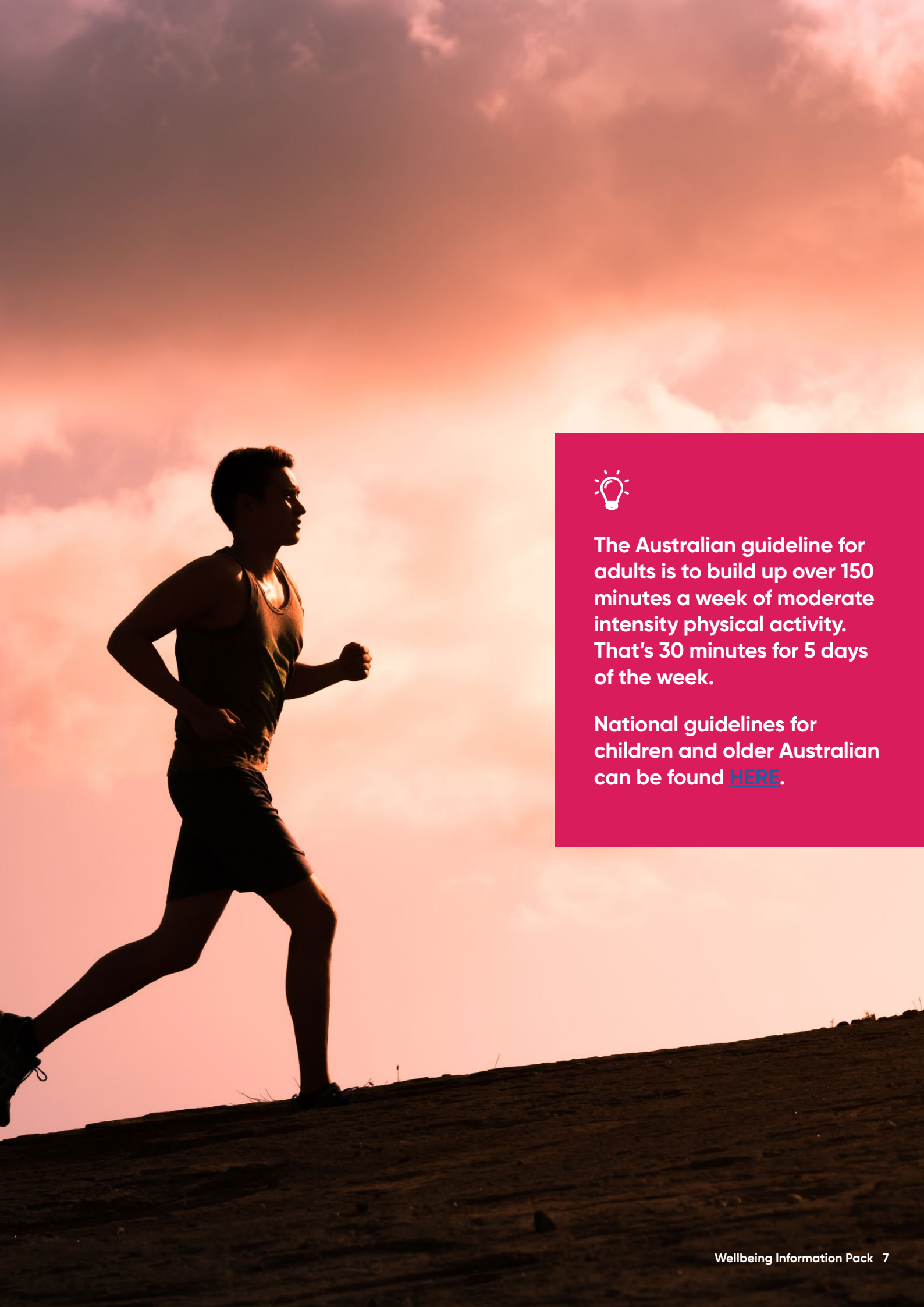
Find your nearest [COVID-19 clinic](#) in NSW.

Make time for Exercise

Tips for staying active (particularly those working from home):

- The NSW Government and top athletes from the NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS) have partnered to deliver [High Performance at Home](#), a free online resource which takes the best expertise and sporting knowledge to create online exercises for everyday families.
- The NSW Government has also launched its [Staying Active resource page](#) to provide information on home activities to entertain kids, families, seniors, and people with disability during the COVID-19 crisis.
- [The Heart Foundation](#) has put together some tips for staying active
- Some online exercise classes currently offering free trials or special discounts. A list of online exercises programs and classes can be found [HERE](#).
- YouTube offers plenty of free online workouts you can do at home that best suits your fitness needs
- Try bodyweight exercises like [push-ups](#), [air-squats](#) or some resistance exercise against a wall or chair
- For children there are some great online options for exercise including [Go Noodle](#) and [PE with Joe](#).
- Exercise Right has some guided [home workouts](#) for older adults included seated exercises.
- A walk down your street, or a run around the yard, can make a huge difference to your day – just be sure to remember to practise good social distancing and hygiene.

As a result of Public Health Orders a number of community facilities and public spaces are currently closed – for the latest updates, visit our [website](#).



The Australian guideline for adults is to build up over 150 minutes a week of moderate intensity physical activity. That's 30 minutes for 5 days of the week.





National guidelines for children and older Australian can be found [HERE](#).

Maintain a Healthy Diet

Eat a rainbow!

Eating a variety of vegetables each day gives our bodies a wide range of nutrients for better health. We should eat different coloured vegetables every day because each colour carries its own set of unique health-promoting properties.

The Australian Dietary Guidelines recommends enjoying a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day and drink plenty of water.

1.  Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties
2.  Vegetables and legumes/beans
3.  Fruit
4.  Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat
5.  Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans



From healthy eating tips, to free programs to get you active, the [Make Healthy Normal site](#) can help you find one small change in your day that will help you (and your family) feel better and healthier for longer. Includes, support for fussy eaters, weekly meal planner, recipes and more!

The Guidelines are intended as a framework for healthy eating among the general population. If you are someone who needs specific dietary advice for a medical condition, it might help to speak with an Accredited Practising Dietitian for personalised nutrition advice and support. Find a dietitian near you [HERE](#).

If you are having trouble accessing food, the dedicated emergency response team at City of Newcastle have compiled a list of national and local [emergency relief meals and grocery services](#) helping to make sure there's food on your table.

Get enough sleep

The Sleep Health Foundation of Australia recommends most adults get 7 – 9 hours sleep each night.

Read this factsheet for [sleep needs across the lifespan](#).

Sleep is important for your immune system. Research shows that sleep-deprived people can have a poorer immune system, meaning that they're more at risk of catching viruses.

Is worrying about COVID-19 keeping you up? [The Sleep Health Foundation](#) has put together some tips on how we can sleep well during the COVID-19 Pandemic:



In the hour before bed, try to avoid reading, watching or listening to anything about COVID-19 and spend that time relaxing



Try to [avoid bright screens](#) 1.5 hours before bed – dim your screen as much as possible or avoid use of interactive devices altogether (with interactive devices what is viewed on the screen changes with input from the user. For example, playing a video game is clearly interactive.



If you have specific concerns on your mind that might impact your sleep, try to discuss these with a trusted source before going to bed. It might even help to write these concerns down and make a plan for tomorrow on how you might address them.



As much as possible, go to bed at the same time each night and wake up at the same time each morning.



As a general rule [avoid caffeine close to bedtime](#), and if you are sensitive you may need to avoid caffeine after lunch.



Make time for exercise and eat well.

What if you can't shut off your mind?

Some people lie awake in bed at night and cannot switch off their thoughts. If this is a problem, set aside a 'thoughts time' during the evening. Use this time to think about what has been happening during the day, make plans and possible solutions. Then don't think about these things until the next day.

Keep the hour before bed as your wind down time and develop a routine that prepares your body and mind for sleep. Listen to quiet music or do relaxation. Remember that we can never shut off our mind. Our thoughts continue all the time, so try to make them calmer thoughts. Create a favourite fantasy place. Or daydream of your favourite holiday spot. If other thoughts come in, consider them for a moment and then try to gently replace them with calm thoughts. If you still can't sleep despite your best attempts at relaxing and trying to calm your thoughts, go out of the bedroom and wait until you're sleepy and tired and then try again.

Sleep is not something that you can force to happen. If you are not asleep within 20 to 30 minutes of going to bed you should get up. Go to another darkened room and sit quietly. Do not have screen time (e.g., television, smartphone, computer) eat, drink or do household chores. When you feel tired and sleepy again go back to bed. This helps your mind link bed with sleep, not with being frustrated and not sleeping. Rest is good – it does not have to be sleep. Don't label yourself as an insomniac as this will increase your worry and frustration.

Avoid/Reduce Alcohol Consumption

The Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks from Drinking Alcohol have recently been reviewed to reflect the most recent and best available scientific research and evidence on the health effects of alcohol consumption.

The [draft guideline recommendations](#) are:

- To reduce the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury for healthy men and women, drink no more than 10 standard drinks per week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day.

The less you choose to drink, the lower your risk of alcohol-related harm. For some people, [not drinking at all is the safest option](#).

- Excessive alcohol use can make it harder for your body to resist disease, increasing your risk of some illnesses.
- If you are concerned about your relationship with alcohol or are looking to cut down your alcohol consumption, the [Day Break app](#), by Hello Sunday Morning, and funded by the Australian Government, is a behaviour change program that supports people have a safe relationship with alcohol.
- More information, tips on how to quit and support can be found [HERE](#).

Alcohol and Other Drugs Support

National Alcohol and Other Drugs Hotline:
1800 250 015

Other 24/7 support services

Counselling Online: counsellingonline.org.au

Family Drug Support: 1300 368 186

Lifeline: 13 11 14

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

MensLine: 1300 789 978

Other resources

Turning Point: turningpoint.org.au

Alcohol and Drug Foundation: adf.org.au

Positive Choices: positivechoices.org.au

Head to Health: headtohealth.gov.au

headspace: headspace.org.au

ReachOut: reachout.com

Avoid/Reduce Tobacco Smoking

People with poor lung function (as a result of smoking or anything else) may be at higher risk of complications if they do become infected with COVID-19.

Quit has answered some frequently asked questions about smoking and COVID-19 [HERE](#).

For support and more information to quit smoking head to [iCanQuit](#)



Drugs and alcohol can increase your risk of poor health which leaves you open to infection. For some, drug use, smoking or consumption of alcohol may be used to deal with emotions. If you feel overwhelmed talk to a health worker or counsellor.

Support Your Mental Health



Infectious disease outbreaks, like the coronavirus (COVID-19), can cause uncertainty and anxiety, and affect our mental health.

Looking after your own mental health and wellbeing is important during times of adverse events such as COVID-19.

It is understandable to experience emotional distress about the outbreak and its potential impact on you, your family and your community.

For info & links to national resources on how to support your own mental health or someone you care about, please visit [LifeinMindAU](https://lifeinmind.au).



Limit Your Media Exposure

No doubt, you may have been overwhelmed by the volumes of COVID-19 information coming at you via the news, online sources, your workmates, family and friends.

Limit media exposure

Today's 24-hour news cycle can make it difficult to turn away from the TV, radio, or news feed, but research has shown that excess media exposure to coverage of stressful events can result in negative mental health outcomes. Use trusted media outlets to gather the information you need, then turn them off.

Access reliable information

Accessing reliable information during an infectious disease outbreak will help ensure you and your family members are taking appropriate steps to stay healthy. Stay up-to-date about developments related to the infectious disease outbreak by using a reliable and accurate source of health-related information.

We recommend the following services:

[Australian Government coronavirus \(COVID-19\) health alert and National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080.](#)

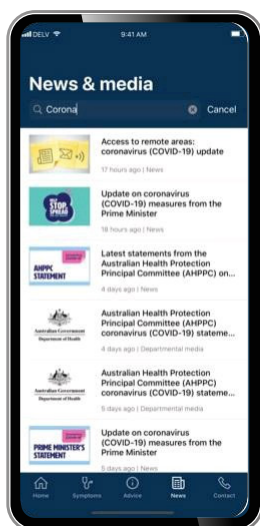
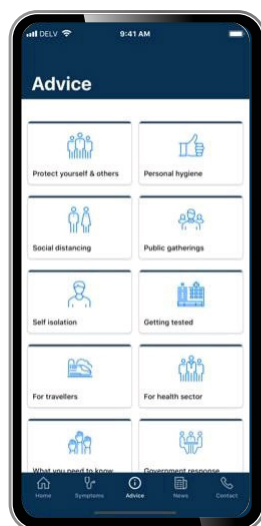
[Health Direct – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[smartraveller.gov.au – travel information for Australian citizens](#)

[World Health Organization – coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#)

Useful tools

The Australian Government has launched a COVID-19 app and WhatsApp chat to provide Australians with information and advice about the fast-changing coronavirus pandemic.



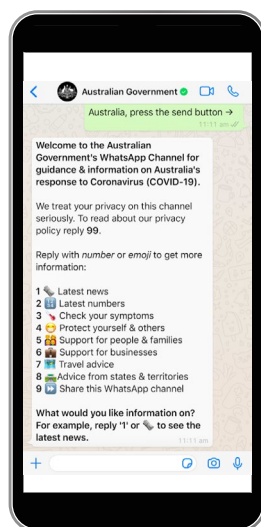
COVID-19 App



[Download for Apple](#)



[Download for Android](#)



WhatsApp

Download WhatsApp (below) and then [send a message to +61 400 253 787](#)



[Download for Apple](#)



[Download for Android](#)



[How to use the government's coronavirus app and WhatsApp account](#)

Maintain Positive Mental Health

Tips to maintain good mental health:

Set up a daily routine

Plan activities that are fun (such as reading, watching movies, hobbies) and that give you a sense of achievement (such as cleaning, completing work tasks, learning a new skill).

Stay positive and remember:

This is unpleasant, but it will pass.

What you say to yourself is important. Listen to the things you are saying to yourself and change negative comments to be more helpful and realistic.

Eat well

Plan and eat a variety of nutritious meals.

Stay active

Create an exercise routine that can be completed at home, to maintain physical fitness and reduce stress.

Stay connected

Maintain regular contact with friends and family via phone, chat, email, or video conferencing.

Access Support

Don't hesitate to reach out to the many services available if you are feeling overwhelmed or low.

Talk to a Professional

It's ok to ask for help. If you're feeling overwhelmed, seek professional support. Psychological therapies can be done online, or remotely via phone or video-conferencing, and are an excellent option if you're in self-isolation, or worried about going to a clinic.

[Head to Health](#) is committed to providing Australians with trusted information and digital supports to help people maintain good mental health.

[Healthdirect Service Finder](#) is a free service that helps you locate the nearest health services in any part of Australia. If you don't have one already, you can find a GP and other health professionals including counsellors and psychologists using the National Health Service Directory.



Other support services

- **The Beyond Blue Support Service** offers short term counselling and referrals by phone and webchat:
Call: 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support

You can also access the dedicated Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service Beyond Blue has developed:

Call: 1800 512 348
coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/

- **Lifeline** telephone, text and webchat services will continue as normal throughout the COVID-19 virus:
Call: 13 11 14 (24 hours/7 days)
Text: 0477 13 11 14 (6pm – midnight AEDT, 7 nights)
Chat online: www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat (7pm – midnight, 7 nights)
For more information: www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak
- **NSW Mental Health line** offers professional help and advice and referrals to local mental health services.
Call: 1800 011 511
For more information: www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth/Pages/Mental-Health-Line.aspx
- **NSW Suicide call back service** is a nationwide service that provides professional 24/7 telephone and online counselling to people who are affected by suicide
Call: 1300 659 467
www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/
- **Black Dog Institute** offers [webinars](#) in an effort to reach out to those who have trouble attending or accessing face to face sessions
www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/



Support services

Adult

Lifeline: 13 11 14 lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636
beyondblue.org.au/forums

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
mensline.org.au

Youth

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800 kidshelpline.com.au

headspace: 1800 650 890 headspace.org.au

ReachOut: reachout.com.au

Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal
headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal
lifeinmindaustralia.com.au

SANE: online forums sane.org

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:
healthinfolnet.ecu.edu.au

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex: 1800 184 527 qlife.org.au

Culturally and linguistically diverse:
mhima.org.au

How to ask R U OK?

We can all make a difference to someone who's struggling by having regular, meaningful conversations about life's ups and downs.

R U OK? encourages everyone to start a conversation as early as possible, as the earlier you reach out, the more likely the outcome will be a positive one.

Do you have a feeling that someone you know or care about isn't behaving as they normally would? Perhaps they seem out of sorts? More agitated or withdrawn? Or they're just not themselves. Trust that gut instinct and take the time to ask them how they're going.

By starting a conversation and commenting on the changes you've noticed, you could help that family member, friend or workmate open up. If they say they are not ok, you can follow these conversation steps to show them they're supported and help them find strategies to better manage the load. If they are ok, that person will know you're someone who cares enough to ask.



1. Ask



2. Listen



3. Encourage action



4. Check in

Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)

Suicide Prevention Training

The [Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Health Network](#) want to empower the community to speak openly and safely about suicide. As a way of doing this they are offering free Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) online training to people over 18 who live or work in the Hunter New England and Central Coast regions.

The short online course, which takes just one hour to complete, will give you:

- skills to identify the warning signs of someone at risk of suicide.
- confidence to speak to them about their thoughts.
- tools to connect them with professional care.

You can access your free QPR training [HERE](#).

Tools

Mindfulness

Mindfulness simply involves being present and bringing your attention to just one thing at a time. This may be your breath. It may be your thoughts. It may even be a big blockbuster action movie.

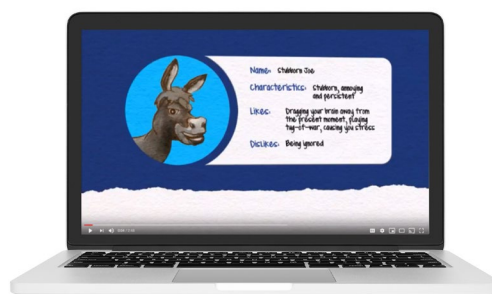
When you are totally present and paying attention you are not thinking about all the things you are worried about.

RAW Mind Coach is an online evidence-based program that aims to develop crucial skills to support the resilience and mental health of people.

It was originally designed to support those in the most challenging roles (paramedics, 000 call takers and other NSW ambulance workers).



This short, simple [mindfulness exercise](#) will help you ground your mind and body, whilst connecting with the present moment.



Rather than engaging in a long and tiring mental tug-of-war, [discover better ways of interacting with stubborn thoughts](#). This short, video is another snippet from the e-learning program

Tools FACE COVID

[Dr Russ Harris](#) has developed a set of practical steps, using the principles of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), for responding effectively to the COVID-19 crisis, here's a quick summary of the key steps:

Focus on what's in your control

Acknowledge your thoughts and feelings

Come back into your body

Engage in what you're doing

Committed action

Opening up

Values

Identify resources

Disinfect and distance

Watch this [brief animation](#) which illustrates how to use FACE COVID to deal with the COVID-19 crisis and the fear, anxiety and worry that goes with it.

Read the FACE COVID eBook [HERE](#)

Looking after your social wellbeing

Stay connected

Some people may feel lonely while many people are working remotely and practising social distancing.



Stay connected with friends and family through social media and over the phone



Talk to loved ones about worries and concerns



Engage in hobbies and enjoyable activities

If you are not in regular contact with others, [COVID Connect](#) is a free service from Australian Red Cross to provide support and community connection to people who are feeling socially isolated as a result of COVID-19.

- One of their volunteers would be happy to call you – once or regularly – for a friendly chat to help maintain or improve social connection.
- Visit the [website](#) or call 1300 885 698.

Read these tips for [staying safe online](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Keeping social connections is important for maintaining good health and wellbeing.

As we ride this wave together as a community, show compassion and kindness to one another, please look out for the elderly, disabled, pregnant or recovering and check in on your workmates, neighbours, family and friends.

Information for parents and carers

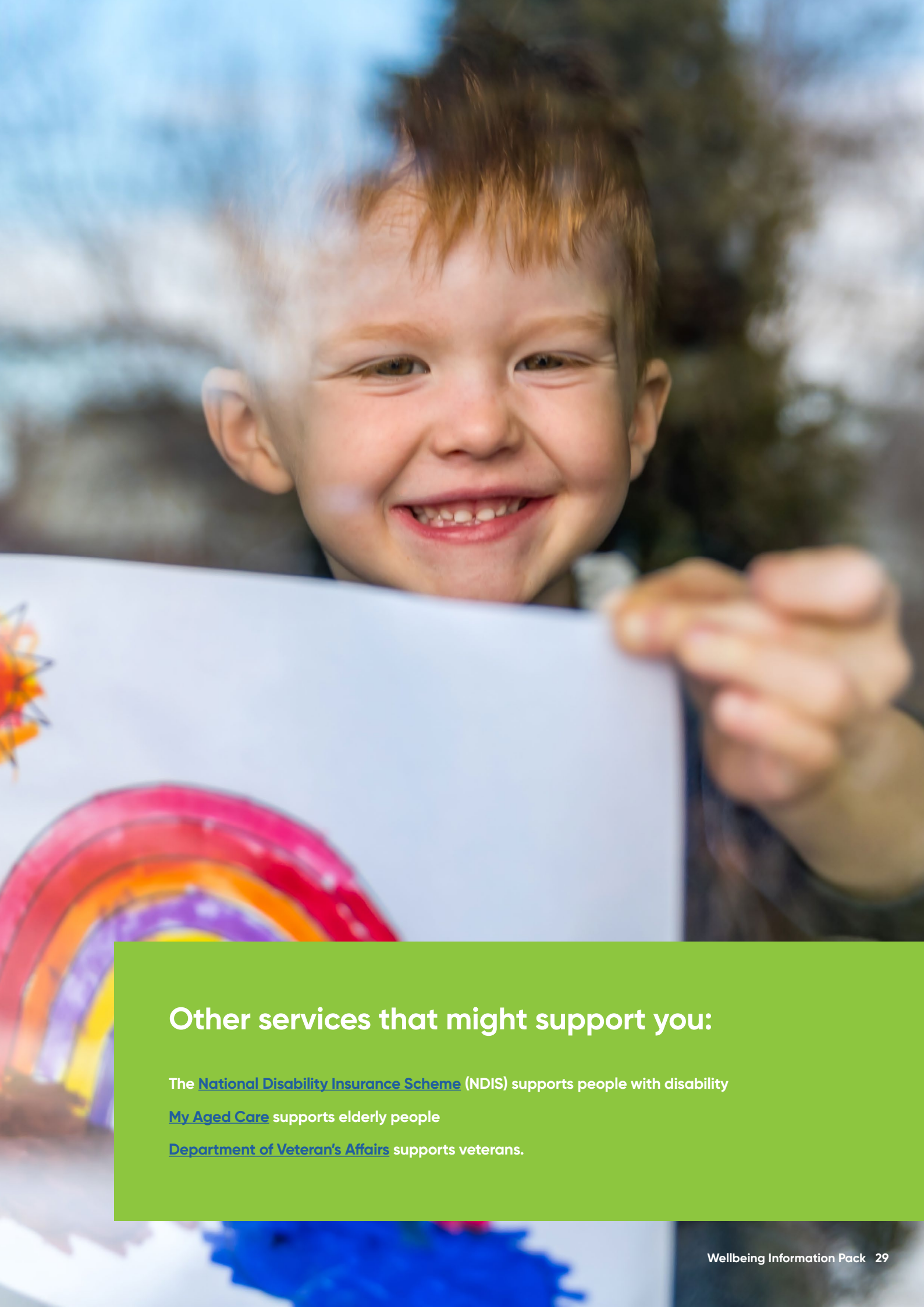
A family guide on COVID-19 with tips to help you and your family cope can be found at raisingchildren.net.au.

- Beyond Blue has some tips on [talking to kids about scary stuff in the news](#).
- Check the Black Dog Institute's [website](#) for upcoming webinars on mental health, like Navigating your Teen's Mental Health.
- [Mensline](#) has developed a resource to help with Home-schooling (and keeping kids busy).

The [Disability Information Helpline](#) provides information and referrals for people with disability who need help because of COVID-19. The Helpline can help families, carers, support workers and services, too. You can contact the Helpline Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm (AEST) and Saturday and Sunday 9am to 7pm (AEST) in the following ways:

- Phone 1800 643 787
- If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, you can also call the National Relay Service on 13 36 77.

Carer Gateway provides information, help and advice for carers through [phone counselling](#), an [online forum](#), [self-guided coaching](#) and [skills courses](#). Phone 1800 422 737.



Other services that might support you:

The [National Disability Insurance Scheme](#) (NDIS) supports people with disability

[My Aged Care](#) supports elderly people

[Department of Veteran's Affairs](#) supports veterans.

Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence occurs when someone uses violence or manipulation to maintain power and control over someone they're close to. It can involve physical violence, intimidation, threats, insults or psychological manipulation.

The abuse can involve a partner or ex-partner, a carer or guardian, a family member, or anyone who is in close contact with another person. Anyone, regardless of their background, can find themselves in an abusive relationship.

Visit [healthdirect](#) to find out more, including signs of domestic violence, its effects, and how you can help someone you think might be unsafe.

If you are experiencing domestic and family violence, whatever your situation, it is important to know that help and support is available, and you should seek help as early as possible.

If you are in danger:

- **Protect yourself.** Get out of the situation and call the police.
- **Talk to someone you trust**, whether it's a friend, family member or a counsellor, who can help you decide what to do next.
- **Then come up with a [plan](#)** – decide what to do the next time something bad happens.

We know that COVID-19 has resulted in significant changes to the way in which we live. If you are having trouble finding a safe place to stay or need other immediate hardship support, visit our [website](#) for information on emergency relief services and other community provided programs.



Protect yourself when using websites and [stay safe online](#) by taking precautions such as deleting your internet history.

Support services

24/7 support

1800RESPECT: 1800 737 732

Lifeline: 13 11 14 lifeline.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636
beyondblue.org.au

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978
mensline.org.au

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800
kidshelpline.com.au

Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal
headtohealth.gov.au

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal
lifeinmindaustralia.com.au

SANE: online forums sane.org

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander:
healthinfolnet.ecu.edu.au

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex:
1800 184 527 qlife.org.au

Culturally and linguistically diverse:
mhima.org.au

Domestic and Family Violence Support:

- **[Esafety for women](#)** a resource from the Office of the eSafety Commissioner to help women manage technology risks and abuse by giving them the tools they need to be confident when online.
- **[1800RESPECT](#)** 24-hour national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault. Phone 1800 737 732.
- **Domestic Violence Line:** 1800 656 463. For translating or interpreting services 131 450 and for TTY 1800 671 442
- **[NSW Department of Justice Victims Services](#)** provide support services, including free counselling and financial assistance to victims of crime.
- **Victims' Access Line:** 1800 633 063
- **Aboriginal Contact Line:** 1800 019 123
- **[ACON](#)** Is an LGBTI health organisation offering information, referrals, counselling, advocacy and practical support for LGBTI people in NSW experiencing domestic and family violence. Hunter, New England, Central Coast & Central West: 02 4962 7700
- **Men's Referral Service** This service from No to Violence offers assistance, information and counselling to help men who use family violence. 1300 766 491
- **Kids Helpline** Free, private and confidential, telephone and online counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 25 in Australia. 1800 551 800
- **[Domestic and Family Violence NSW Resources](#)**
- **[Ask Izzy](#)** is an online search tool to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness find shelter, food, health and other critical services. If you're on the Telstra mobile network, you can access Ask Izzy even if you don't have credit.

Financial Wellbeing



For some people COVID-19 may be having a big impact on their financial wellbeing. If you're worried about your finances or know someone who is, it can help to know that there are ways to find financial relief.

- For financial information and services provided by the Australian government, please visit [Services Australia](#).
- If you are experiencing financial hardship, [National Debt Helpline](#) offers free financial counselling. The hotline is open from 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. Call 1800 007 007
- [Money Smart](#), by the Australian Securities & Investments Commission (ASIC), helps to improve the personal finances of Australians. The website provides information and tools to help people make smart financial decisions.

Other resources:

- BeyondBlue - [Work and your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Help while you look for work](#)



newcastle.nsw.gov.au/COVID-19