



Tips for Supporting

# YOUR CHILD'S WELLBEING

during remote learning

**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

# MENTAL HEALTH & REMOTE LEARNING

Significant changes to routine, absence from school and concerns around the coronavirus outbreak can be stressful and impact on our mental health and wellbeing. It's natural to feel a range of emotions, such as stress, worry, anxiety, boredom, or low mood.

*• But there are ways to maintain good mental health during these times*

# Maintain a healthy lifestyle

- Be a role model.
- **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).
- **Encourage your child to stay active—**create an exercise routine that can be completed at home, to maintain physical fitness and reduce stress.
- **Eat well—**plan to eat a variety of nutritious meals regularly.
- **Ensure your child stays connected** with friends and family via phone, chat, email, or video conferencing.
- Maintain **normal sleep routines.**

# Stick to routines

- Over the school holidays, structured days with regular mealtimes and bedtimes are still an important part of keeping children happy and healthy.
- Where you can, have a daily routine. Create a shared timetable with your family and put it up on the fridge where everyone can see.
- If possible, find a time every day to talk about the importance of good hygiene and teach them the essentials of practicing physical distancing.
- Include things like outside time, play time, free time on technology, creative time and learning time.
- It is okay to be flexible and respond to the needs and emotional state of your child.

# Stay informed



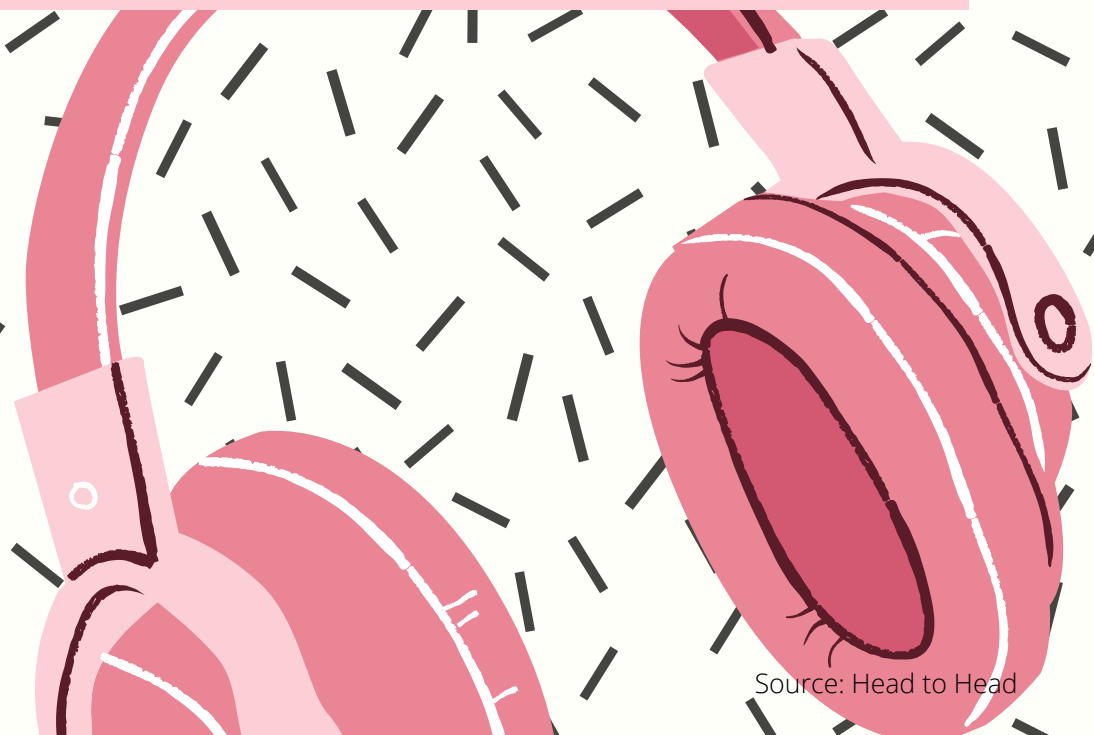
It's important to get accurate information from credible sources such as those listed below. This will help you maintain perspective and feel more in control.

Australian Government coronavirus (COVID-19) health alert Health Direct – Coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Health Direct have developed a COVID-19 Symptom Checker - an online, self-guided tool to help people find out if they need to seek medical help.
- Coronavirus Health information line: 1800 020 080
- World Health Organization – coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.

# SHUT DOWN THE NOISE

- Try to maintain perspective.
- While it is reasonable for people to be concerned about the outbreak of coronavirus, try to remember that medical, scientific and public health experts around the world are working hard to contain the virus, treat those affected and develop a vaccine as quickly as possible.
- Find a healthy balance in relation to media coverage
- Being exposed to large volumes of negative information can heighten feelings of anxiety. While it's important to stay informed, you may find it useful to limit your media intake if it is upsetting you or your family.



# UNDERSTAND HISTORY

Events like infectious diseases often follow a predictable course.

In the last 50 years there have been multiple national and international episodes of concern around conditions such as tuberculosis, SARS, Ebola, HIV, hepatitis, measles, to name a few.

Initially, there is often skepticism, followed by attention, followed by panic, followed by reality, followed by a return to normality.

# Communicate!



Don't be afraid to discuss coronavirus (COVID-19) with your children

- Most children will have already heard about coronavirus and parents and carers should take the opportunity to talk to them about the current situation.
- Honest and regular communication is key.
- Not talking about something can make children worry more.
- Children often rely on their friends and social media for the news. Parents and carers can help by positioning themselves as a trusted source for information and as a person who can help children with their questions





BE

# GUIDED

by your child

- Check in with your child regularly. Give them opportunities to ask you questions over the coming weeks and months.
- Be reassuring. Tell children that the changes in their life have been introduced to make us all safer. Tell them, that eventually, things will go back to normal.
- Remember that children will be listening to adult conversations more than usual.
- Don't dismiss your child's fears. It is understandable for them to be concerned because they have probably never experienced anything like this before.
- Tell your child that doctors and scientists all around the world are working really hard to learn more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and to keep us safe.

# Encouraging Communication

Being in a confined space for a long period of time may lead to added stress and conflict in the home. what you can do:

## REASSURE

- Talk to your family about what is happening, understanding the situation may reduce their anxiety.
- Help your children think about how they have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassure them.
- Discuss different ways children and adults react to stressful situations.
- Remind them that isolation will not last for long but necessary for their ongoing safety.

# Building Connection

- Encourage your children to keep in touch with family members and friends via telephone, email or where appropriate, social media.
- Communicate with your children's school often as they will regularly update and provide you with important and current information.
- Have fun together as a family.
- Remember, any decisions or actions you may take is what you have considered best for you and your family.
- Do what you can, try and be patient with yourself, your family and others, and seek support as needed.

# VIRTUAL HUGS



**#StopTheSpread**

# STOP THE BUGS

# FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

- Helping your children to think about how they have coped with difficult situations in the past and reassuring them that they will cope with this situation too.
- Reminding them that the isolation won't last for long.
- Focus on what you're doing to stay safe.
- Give them some control over what is happening.
- Teach the importance of physical distancing, hand washing and how to do these things properly. Remind them of their responsibility to protect others.

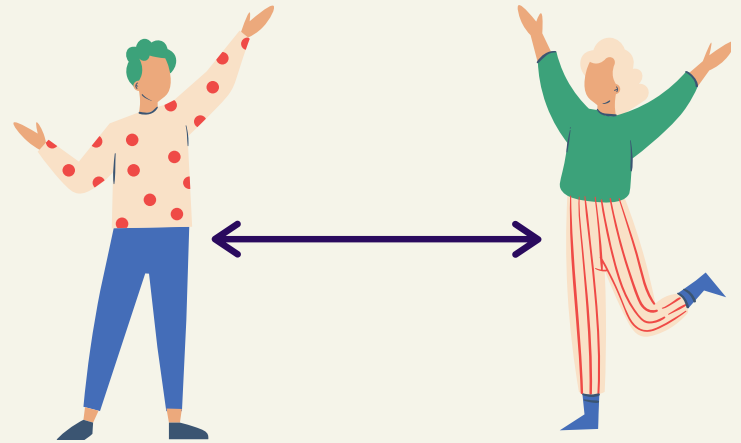


# STOP THE SPREAD



## WASH YOUR HANDS FREQUENTLY

Regularly and thoroughly clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or wash them with soap and water.



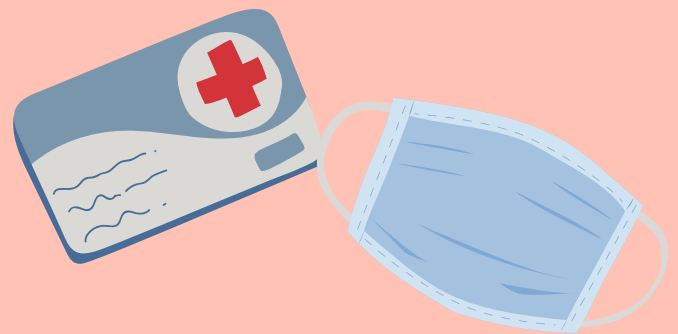
## MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Maintain at least 1 metre (3 feet) distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.



## AVOID TOUCHING EYES, NOSE AND MOUTH

Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses. Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth.



## IF YOU HAVE A FEVER, COUGH AND DIFFICULTY BREATHING, SEEK MEDICAL CARE EARLY

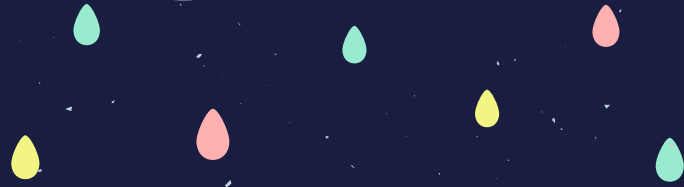
Stay home if you feel unwell. If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and call in advance.



# STAY POSITIVE

*This is unpleasant, but it will pass. What we say to ourselves is important.*

*Listen to the things your child is saying to themselves and help them change negative comments to be more helpful and realistic.*



This too  
shall pass.





# DEEP BREATHING

Our breathing changes when we are feeling anxious. We tend to take short, quick, shallow breaths, or even hyperventilate; this is called “overbreathing”.

Calm breathing is a great portable tool that you can use whenever you are feeling anxious. However, it does require some practice.

Calm breathing involves taking smooth, slow, and regular breaths. Sitting upright is usually better than lying down or slouching, because it can increase the capacity of your lungs to fill with air.

1. Take a slow breath in through the nose, breathing into your lower belly (for about 4 seconds)
2. Hold your breath for 1 or 2 seconds
3. Exhale slowly through the mouth (for about 4 seconds)
4. Wait a few seconds before taking another breath

About 6-8 breathing cycles per minute is often helpful to decrease anxiety, but find your own comfortable breathing rhythm.

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# ACCESS SUPPORT

It's normal to feel overwhelmed or stressed by news of the outbreak. We encourage people who have experienced mental health issues in the past to:

- activate your support network
- acknowledge feelings of distress
- seek professional support early if you're having difficulties.

For those already managing mental health issues, continue with your treatment plan and monitor for any new symptoms.

Social contact and maintaining routines can be supportive for our mental health and well being. In circumstances where this is not possible, staying connected with friends and family online or by phone may assist.

If someone is experiencing a severe crisis and is potentially unsafe or requires immediate attention - please call for help or visit the nearest emergency department or call '000'.



# REFERENCES



HEADSPACE



NEW SOUTH  
WALES



STUDENT WELLBEING HUB

DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION



BEYOND BLUE



DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION



HEAD TO HEALTH

WESTERN  
AUSTALIA



MIND SPOT



VICTORIAN  
DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION



CENTER OF DISEASE CONTROL