

COVID-19

Employee Wellbeing Information Pack



City of
Newcastle

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

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

The purpose of this information pack is to support you and your health and wellbeing. If you have any wellbeing questions or think there is something else that can be included, please get in touch wellbeing@ncc.nsw.gov.au

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 your leader to discuss your current situation. If you'd like to speak to someone else, your People and Culture Business Partner is always there to support you too. You will also find many other support services available through this information pack.

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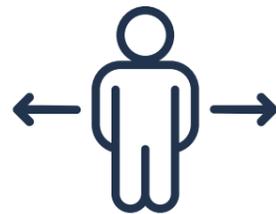
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Protect yourself & others



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)

Make time for Exercise

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

- [The Heart Foundation](#) has put together some tips for staying active
- Some online exercise classes currently offering free trials or special discounts including [Centr](#) and [Freeletics](#). A list of others 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
- Stand or walk around the house when you're on the phone
- If you have a pedometer aim for 10,000 steps a day

Corporate fitness update:

Following the announcement from the Federal Government to shut down all non-essential services, CN's corporate fitness will suspend all memberships from pay period beginning March 23rd until the restrictions are lifted.



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.



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. It includes, support for fussy eaters, weekly meal planner, recipes and more!

www.makehealthynormal.nsw.gov.au/

Get enough sleep

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

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



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.



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

Avoid/Reduce Tobacco Smoking

The Australian Guidelines to Reduce Health Risks recommend healthy men and women, drink no more than 10 standard drinks per week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day to reduce the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury.

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](#).

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.

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](#)

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://www.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.](#)

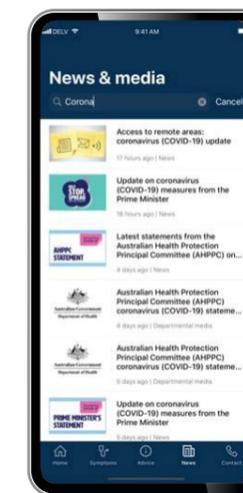
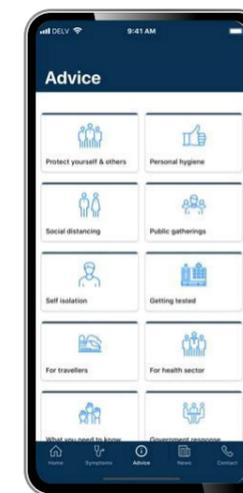
[Health Direct – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[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.



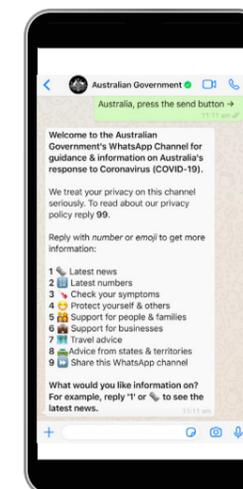
COVID-19 App



[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

Head to Health is committed to providing Australians with trusted information and digital support to help people maintain good 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.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

CN offers all employees and their immediate family members a free, confidential counselling, coaching and wellbeing service. Our EAP service is currently provided by Converge International, and allows you access to professional telephone support, Live Chat support and a vast library of online health and wellbeing resources.

Call 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327)

Chat or book an appointment [online](#)

Or Download the mobile APP



[Download for Apple](#)



[Download for Android](#)

EAP Frequently Asked Questions

Will CN know the details of my call?

The service is completely confidential, just like seeing a private psychologist. Converge will not share information about you with CN unless you authorise for them to do so. When making appointments, you may be asked for information on your organisation and service unit or some demographic questions. This information may be used towards high level reporting on trends and utilisation rates.

I've contacted EAP and can't get an appointment for a while, but I really need to talk with someone, what can I do?

Let someone know. Your People & Culture Business Partner can help organise an alternative. If you need emergency support and cannot get an appointment right away, there is other help.

Is EAP just for mental health issues? What else can I access EAP for?

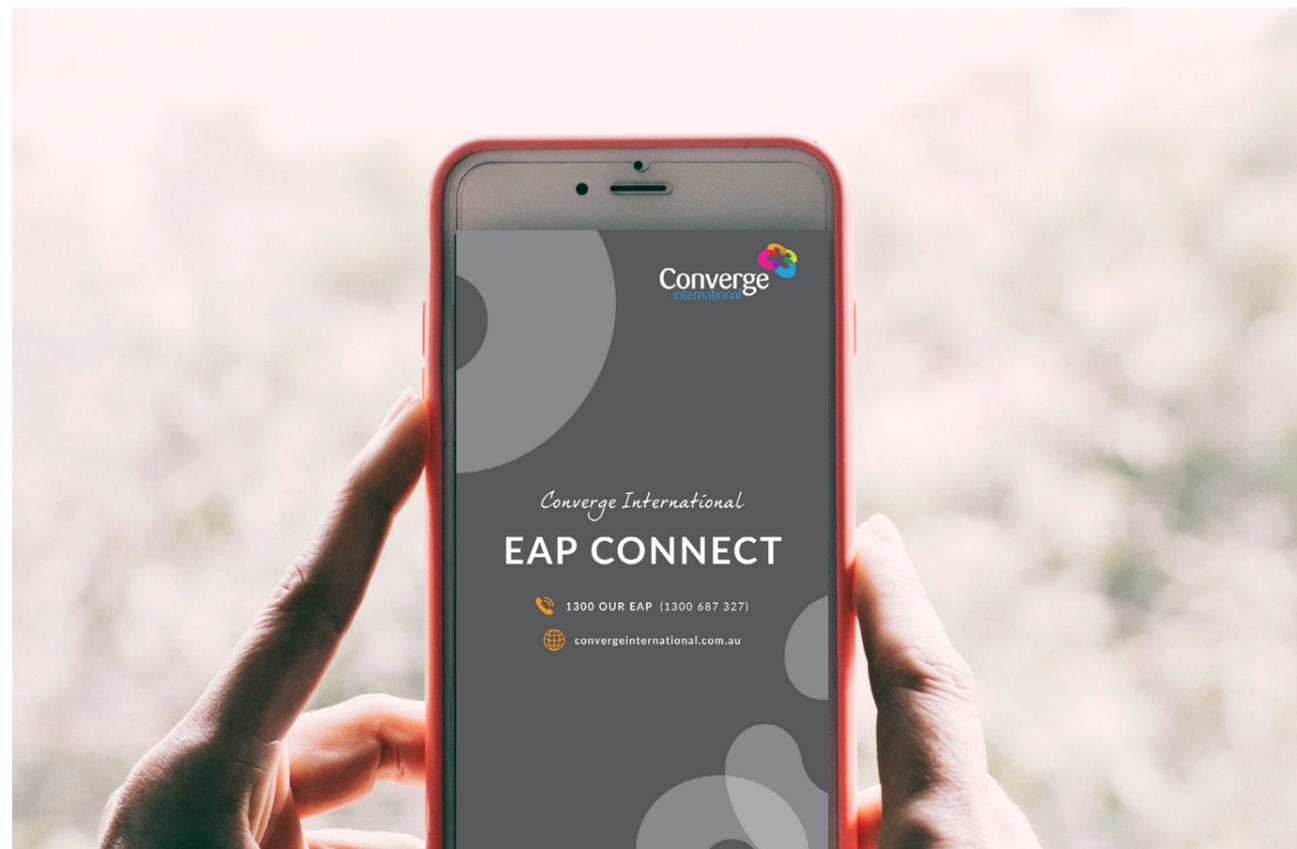
CN's EAP program can offer support in any of the following areas:

- Employee assist (including work issues and personal issues)
- Manager Assist
- Career Assist
- Conflict Assist
- Nutrition and Lifestyle Assist
- Money Assist
- Family Assist

You can use up to 6 free sessions per ISSUE.

I didn't really connect with the counsellor from EAP, is there another option?

Yes. You can request a different Converge International counsellor. Not everyone will connect with their first counsellor. Or your People & Culture Business Partner may help you find a counsellor from another service provider.



Other support services

- **The Beyond Blue Support Service** offers short term counselling and referrals by phone and webchat:
1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/get-immediate-support
- **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](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/) 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:
healthinonet.ecu.edu.au

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

Culturally and linguistically diverse:
mhima.org.au

Tools Mindfulness

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:

- F**ocus on what's in your control
 - A**cknowledge your thoughts and feelings
 - C**ome back into your body
 - E**ngage in what you're doing
-
- C**ommitted action
 - O**pening up
 - V**alues
 - I**dentify resources
 - D**isinfect 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](#)

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

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

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



[VIDEO](#): Talking to kids about scary stuff in the news



Check the Black Dog Institute's website for upcoming webinars on [Navigating your Teen's Mental Health](#)



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, family and friends.

Domestic and family violence

Domestic and family violence refers to acts of violence that occur within a household or between family members including current or former partners in an intimate relationship. There are many types of domestic and family violence including violent, abusive or intimidating behaviour by a partner, carer or family member to control, dominate or cause fear. It doesn't have to be physical abuse. It can be emotional, psychological, financial, sexual or other types of abuse.

Domestic Violence Officers

If you are experiencing family and domestic violence you are encouraged to seek assistance within the workplace. CN has trained contact people who can help provide support if you are experiencing family and domestic violence.

- Cary Hughes: 02 4974 2149 chughes@ncc.nsw.gov.au
- Deanne Sullivan: 02 4974 2342 dsullivan@ncc.nsw.gov.au
- Mandy Hislop: 02 4974 6164 mhislop@ncc.nsw.gov.au
- Natasha Roberts: 02 4974 6161 nroberts@ncc.nsw.gov.au
- Patrizia Giglietti: 02 4974 6037 pgiglietta@ncc.nsw.gov.au
- Tena Blignaut: 02 4974 6018 tblignaut@ncc.nsw.gov.au



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:
healthinfolinet.ecu.edu.au

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

Culturally and linguistically diverse:
mhima.org.au

Other 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.
- **Domestic and Family Violence NSW Resources**
- **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
- **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. 1800 737 732
- **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

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 decision.

Other resources:

- BeyondBlue - [Work and your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak](#)

wellbeing@ncc.nsw.gov.au

(02) 4974 6067