

Staying mentally healthy

Your emotional and mental wellbeing is important. It is normal to feel stressed or lonely during this challenging time, but there are some things you can do to feel better.

While there are things that we can't control now, there are things we can do to boost our mental wellbeing and that of your loved ones.

- **Stay connected**
This helps to make us feel safer, less stressed and less anxious. We can support each other to get through this. While we are limiting social contact to contain the spread of COVID-19, there are still lots of ways we can connect.
- **Acknowledge your feelings**
It's completely normal to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious, worried or scared in the current situation. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you're feeling. This could be by writing thoughts and feelings down in a journal, talking to others, doing something creative or practising meditation. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you're feeling. Reach out to others.
- **Stick to routines where possible**
Try to go to sleep and wake up at the same time, eat at regular times, shower, change your clothes, have regular e-meetings with colleagues or virtual coffee dates with friends and do your chores. Meditating and exercising can help you to relax and have a positive impact on your thoughts. Try not to increase unhealthy habits like comfort eating, drinking, smoking or vaping.
- **Check-in on other people who might need help**
Reaching out to those who may be feeling alone or concerned can benefit both you and the person receiving support.
- **Seek accurate information**
You may find it useful to limit your media intake. Get the facts from legitimate websites to help distinguish facts from rumours. Seek information updates at specific times once or twice a day.
- **Don't be afraid to seek further professional support**
For support with anxiety, distress or mental wellbeing, you can call or text [1737](tel:1737) to talk with a trained counsellor for free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
Ring your GP, GP practices are open but are working differently. Call them first, this will help them decide how they can help you.
All mental health and addiction services are continuing to provide services during this time, albeit by confidential and secure virtual health options. You may find WellSouth's *Video Consultations: A Guide for Patients* helpful for virtual consultations.
- **Continue existing mental health treatment if possible**
Notice if your symptoms are getting worse. Talk to your GP, counsellor, caseworker or mental health team about how they can continue supporting you. Can your appointments take place over the phone, via email, text or video chat?
You may find WellSouth's *Video Consultations: A Guide for Patients* helpful for virtual consultations.

Useful resources

Free apps, toolkits, and other digital resources are available to help New Zealanders look after their mental wellbeing.

- Getting Through Together has tips and advice on how to cope with the stress of COVID-19 in the Getting Through Together toolkit at www.allright.org.nz It also includes Sparklers at Home, a resource for parents to talk with their primary-school-aged children about their mental health and wellbeing sparklers.org.nz/parenting/
- Staying on Track – a guide to support your wellbeing during COVID-19. justathought.co.nz/covid19
- depression.org.nz continue to support people through depression. COVID-19 specific mental health advice is available.
- www.booksonprescription.co.nz has heaps of online resources to support your mental wellbeing.

For more information

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