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Connection and support through coronavirus outbreak

Beyond Blue has developed a suite of online resources about coping with COVID-19 in response to rising community concern about the virus.

Contacts about COVID-19 to the Beyond Blue Support Service are increasing and Beyond Blue's online discussion forum about the virus is attracting unprecedented interest.

The '[Coping during the coronavirus outbreak](#)' topic on the discussion forum is receiving unprecedented interest with an average of 2000 views each day.

So far, there have been more than 21,000 views of the coronavirus forum discussion. The forums provide a safe place for people to connect and support each other by sharing stories of hope, resilience and recovery.

The Beyond Blue Support Service, which is funded entirely by donations, is attracting an increasing number of calls and emails about COVID-19. One in four contacts is explicitly related to COVID-19.

Beyond Blue has shared this information in response to a high volume of inquiries about how COVID-19 has impacted the Beyond Blue Support Service.

Beyond Blue is encouraging a calm, practical approach to managing the emotional impact of the virus. The new '[Looking after your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak](#)' web page includes tips about coping with self-isolation, how to talk to children about the outbreak, advice for health care workers, and information about support-seeking.

Beyond Blue Chair The Hon Julia Gillard AC said it was normal to feel worried in these circumstances and encouraged people to seek support if they needed it.

"These are uncertain times and the challenges ahead will test us as a nation, but we cannot let fear and panic divide us," Ms Gillard said.

"By coming together, by following official advice and by showing compassion towards those around us, we will get through this.

"In the same way that we're taking careful steps to manage our physical health, we can actively look after our mental health and Beyond Blue is developing resources to support people to do that."

Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman said staying connected with family and friends would be vital in maintaining good mental health as the coronavirus outbreak continues to impact our daily lives.

"We expect that there will be more demand for mental health support as the health, social and economic consequences of COVID-19 play out and we would encourage everyone to reach out early," Ms Harman said.

"Remember, you're not alone and support is available. The Beyond Blue Support Service is available around the clock, by phone or online, and our online forums are moderated by people who understand and care."

There are simple steps you can take to look after your mental health, even in times of physical distancing or if you are self-isolating, including:

Contact: media@beyondblue.org.au

Beyond Blue
PO Box 6100 Hawthorn West VIC 3122
Beyond Blue Support Service 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au

- Staying connected with family and friends. If you can't do it face-to-face, maintain contact through email, social media, video conferencing or phone calls.
- Keep regular sleep routines and eat healthy foods.
- Try to maintain physical activity – even just going for a walk can help
- Stick to the facts. Misinformation can fuel feelings of anxiety so it's important to seek information from credible sources such as government and health department web sites.
- Limit your exposure to social media and news if you find it upsetting.
- If you are working from home, maintain a healthy balance by allocating specific work hours, taking regular breaks and, if possible, establishing a dedicated work space.

Mental health professionals are available on the Beyond Blue Support Service via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).