

22 September 2020

## Tip sheet 5:

# Getting support for residents

Getting mental health support for residents of residential aged care facilities has been difficult in the past.

People living in residential aged care facilities are not eligible for GP mental health treatment plans and while there are services such as the Aged Persons Mental Health Services and Dementia Behaviour Management Advisory Service, not every resident is eligible for or needs to access these services.

There are now options for mental health support for residents who are experiencing, or at risk of, mild to moderate mental health conditions including anxiety and depression.

The services are also available to residents who are at risk of developing mental illness such as residents who are experiencing social isolation and loneliness during the COVID-19 lockdown, or who are having difficulty adjusting to living in residential care.

## Who to contact for psychological support and help for residents:

<b>Better Place Australia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Free psychological support services for residents who are experiencing mild to moderate mental distress and who are living in residential aged care facilities in the North Western Melbourne PHN region.</li><li>✓ Referrals to the service can be made by the resident's GP or by a registered nurse of the facility.</li><li>✓ Services are delivered by experienced mental health practitioners.</li><li>✓ Services will be offered via phone, tele-health, or face-to-face.</li><li>✓ Enquiries about the service and referrals can be made by ringing <b>(03) 9556 5333</b> or by contacting Rhonda Withers via email at <a href="mailto:Rhonda.withers@betterplace.com.au">Rhonda.withers@betterplace.com.au</a></li></ul>
<b>Swinburne University Wellbeing Clinic for Older Adults</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Offers a free confidential telehealth counselling and support service for residents and staff of residential aged care facilities and family members of residents.</li><li>✓ The service is delivered by postgraduate students studying psychology, counselling or social work.</li><li>✓ You can refer yourself or your loved one to the service (no GP referral required). Contact the clinic via the <a href="#">Online Referral Form</a></li></ul>

We acknowledge the peoples of the Kulin nation as the Traditional Owners of the land on which our work in the community takes place. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present.



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## For residents who can make a phone call independently:

<b>Australian Red Cross COVID-Connect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Australian Red Cross COVID-Connect service provides a telephone-based social support service (not mental health services) for people who are feeling isolated and lonely due to the COVID-19 pandemic – <b>1800 733 276</b></li></ul>
<b>Beyond Blue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Beyond Blue has a Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service.</li><li>✓ Ring 1800 512 348 or you can chat to a trained counsellor online and access coaching support.</li><li>✓ For further information see <a href="#">Beyond Blue Coronavirus information</a></li></ul>
<b>Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ OPAN run a COVID help line for older adults and their family caregivers which is open from 6 am – 10 pm seven days a week.</li><li>✓ Call <b>1800 237 981</b> or visit <a href="https://opan.com.au/covid/">https://opan.com.au/covid/</a> (no referral required).</li><li>✓ The OPAN website also has links to a range of free resources including <a href="#">OPAN webinars</a> covering a range of COVID-related topics. The most recent webinar topic is <a href="#">Things to consider if you're thinking about moving out of an aged care home 19 August 2020</a></li></ul>

## Support for aged care staff and residents' family members

See Tip Sheet 4 – Caring for yourself (for residential aged care staff)

See Tip Sheet 6 – Mental health supports for residents' family members

## About North Western Melbourne PHN

North Western Melbourne Primary Health Network was established by the Australian Government to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of medical services, reduce fragmentation of care and improve health outcomes for everyone, especially for the most vulnerable. Australia is divided into 31 PHNs. NWMPHN is the biggest of Victoria's six primary health networks with a catchment of about 1.7 million people covering highly diverse communities from Melbourne's CBD and inner city to the rapidly growing suburbs in the north and west. Visit our website [nwmpnh.org.au](http://nwmpnh.org.au)

Before you go, if you would like to contribute your tips and tricks to help others in residential aged care facilities please contact [primarycare@nwmpnh.org.au](mailto:primarycare@nwmpnh.org.au)

Also consider subscribing to our [COVID-19 e-bulletins for general practices](#) which will help keep you on top of the rapidly changing situation. If you need further help, email [primarycare@nwmpnh.org.au](mailto:primarycare@nwmpnh.org.au)

All the tips sheets for residential aged care facilities are available on the [COVID-19 aged care support page](#) on our website.