

22 September 2020

Tip sheet 6:

Getting support for residents' family members

It's OK to not feel OK – feeling worried, anxious, sad, stressed, out of control, angry, numb and worn out are all normal reactions to the current situation we find ourselves in during COVID-19.

The important thing is to recognise how you are feeling and to reach out for help to deal with your emotions and stress.

There are a range of places you can go to find help and support for you and your loved ones. All are operating throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and delivering services online, via telephone, or via telehealth, and some are also still offering face to face services.

Even though it's hard to do, it's OK to ask for help for yourself. You can't care for others if you don't care for yourself first.

If you are looking for support for your loved one:

Better Place Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Free psychological support services for residents living in residential aged care facilities across north western Melbourne.✓ Available for residents who are experiencing (or at risk of experiencing) mild-moderate mental distress, such as depression and anxiety, or who are having difficulty adjusting to living in residential aged care.✓ Referrals to the service must be made by the resident's GP or by a registered nurse of the facility.✓ Services are delivered by experienced mental health practitioners.✓ Services will be offered via phone, tele-health, or face-to-face.
Swinburne University Wellbeing Clinic for Older Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Offers a free confidential telehealth counselling and support service for residents and staff of residential aged care facilities and family members of residents.✓ The service is delivered by postgraduate students studying psychology, counselling or social work.✓ You can refer yourself or your loved one to the service (no GP referral required). Contact the clinic via the Online Referral Form

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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Free supports that you can contact yourself – you don't need a GP referral:

<p>CAREinMIND™ - Wellbeing Support Service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A free telephone/online counselling service for people who live or work within the north, western or central Melbourne region. ✓ Provides up to 3 counselling sessions plus an initial intake session and a follow up session if required. ✓ Call 1300 096 269 or visit www.careinmind.com.au
<p>Australian Red Cross COVID-Connect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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 – 1800 733 276
<p>Beyond Blue</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Beyond Blue has a Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service. ✓ Ring 1800 512 348 or you can chat to a trained counsellor online or access 1:1 coaching support. ✓ For further information see Beyond Blue Coronavirus information
<p>Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 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. ✓ Call 1800 237 981 or visit https://opan.com.au/covid/ (no referral required). ✓ The OPAN website also has links to a range of free resources including OPAN webinars covering a range of COVID-related topics. The most recent webinar topic is Things to consider if you're thinking about moving out of an aged care home 19 August 2020
<p>Carers Victoria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Carers Victoria run a range of services for carers which are continuing to operate throughout the COVID pandemic. These include a Carer Advisory Line and counselling services. ✓ Call 1800 514 845 or visit https://www.carersvictoria.org.au/ (no referral required)

Supports that are available if you need a bit more:

<p>HeadtoHelp</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A new service available to anyone in the community with or without a GP mental health care plan. ✓ Call 1800 595 212 to speak to a trained professional who will take your call, give you advice, and if you need it, connect you to a free HeadtoHelp hub or help you find the support that suits your needs. ✓ Hubs are in locations across NWMPHN (Broadmeadows, Wyndham Vale and Brunswick East) Visit HeadtoHelp.org.au
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Your General Practitioner (GP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If you need more support, your GP can work with you to develop a Mental Health Care Plan for you and refer you for up to 10 Medicare-subsidised sessions with a mental health professional (such as a psychologist). ✓ An additional 10 Medicare subsidised sessions are available for people subjected to further restrictions in areas impacted by the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. ✓ Most mental health professionals charge an additional gap payment on top of the Medicare rebate.
CAREinMIND™	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A free mental health service for people of all ages who are unable to afford (or are ineligible for) other local services and who live in the north, west and central Melbourne area. ✓ A referral from a GP, or psychiatrist is required. ✓ The service is delivered by experienced qualified mental health professionals and may be delivered face to face or via telehealth. ✓ Visit CAREinMIND mental health services

Other ways of getting support

Private health insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If you have private health insurance extras cover, you may be able to receive a rebate from your fund for sessions with a psychologist. ✓ It is worth checking with your fund and finding out what is covered by your policy.
Online resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There are many good online resources available although it can be a bit overwhelming to sift through them all. ✓ Ask your GP or mental health professional for their recommendations. ✓ Some that you might wish to try out for yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Beyond Blue ○ Head to Help – Department of Health website to find the right digital mental health resources for your needs ○ Black Dog Institute Coronavirus: Resources for Anxiety and Stress ○ Smiling Mind – also has a free App which can be downloaded onto your phone

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 nwmpfn.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@nwmpfn.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@nwmpfn.org.au

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