

As a community we have faced many challenges in the past month. We have all been impacted by the COVID-19 and the Government's initiatives to flatten the curve, although we recognise that some families have been more affected than others. The College wishes to provide families with some information which we hope you will find helpful in supporting your daughter, your family, and yourselves during this challenging time.

Parents often put their own needs after the needs of the rest of the family, but ask yourself, who will take care of them, if you are not well? Remember back to that time when you were sitting on an airplane and the flight attendant demonstrated the safety requirements "In case of an emergency, oxygen masks will drop down in front of you. Please secure your mask before assisting those around you". This is important, as you will be of no use to anyone else if your needs are not taken care of too.

Remember that there are things that are in your control right now, and if you focus on these things you are likely to feel an improved sense of wellbeing and a more positive outlook. Children look to adults for guidance on how to react to stressful events, so it is important to be aware of your own reactions. Acknowledge some level of concern, but do not panic and focus on the things that your family can do to reduce the risk of becoming unwell. The following tips can help.

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## **Tips to assist you and your family**

### **Stick to a routine**



Encourage your children to continue to wake at their usual time, eat a healthy breakfast and get dressed to start their day. It is also important for parents who are working from home, self-isolating, or not currently working. This process will help provide some structure and normalcy for the whole family's day and help set the kids up for a day of learning. It will also be helpful when the time comes for schools to be operating as normal and everyone will need to have a viable routine to get them to school or work on time.

Encourage your child to make a plan for the day which includes the subjects that they need to attend to, as well as makes time for adequate breaks where they can have a healthy snack or meal and gives them time to have a brain break. Ensure you take regular breaks too, making time for doing things you enjoy.

## Encourage a healthy diet



Encourage your children to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, proteins and carbohydrates. This is best done via role modelling of this behaviour. Plenty of water will also assist physical wellbeing. For further guidance on healthy eating please see the list of resources further in this information.

Encourage your children to get in the kitchen and help make dinner or snacks. This will encourage them to get interact with you and they may be more likely to give foods a try when they have had a hand in making them.

## Healthy Sleep habits



The National Sleep Foundation recommends that those aged 6-13 years do best when they sleep between 9-11 hours and adolescents aged between 14-17 years require 8-10 hours. Adults require between 7-9 hours sleep per night. Some helpful strategies include:

- Only using the bedroom for sleep. Homework and recreation to be completed outside of the bedroom, so that the bedroom is only associated with sleep.
- Going to bed and waking at a regular time each day, including waking at a set time, no matter how many hours of sleep were achieved the night before. The longer-term effect is that it can help to adjust our body clock, so that we will start to feel sleepy at the same time each night.
- Make sure that your room is dark enough in order to cue your body to produce melatonin which assists in getting to sleep. Then in the mornings, try and get some exposure to sunshine to suppress the melatonin.
- Having a warm shower or bath before bed can be a helpful cue to your body that it is time to switch off and relax. However, if you get too hot from a shower or bath this can impair your body's ability to fall asleep. Our body needs to return to a cooler temperature before it will be able to achieve sleep.
- If your mind has trouble switching off, keep a notepad by your bed to write down the things you are worried about or need to complete tomorrow, giving yourself permission to relax and go to sleep.
- Try a relaxation app before bed, particularly ones that include deep breathing, meditation, or guided relaxation. Some to try include 'Smiling Mind', 'Calm', and 'Headspace'.

## Exercise



Exercise is important for both physical and emotional wellbeing. It can help to relieve tension and stress and can help to boost feel good hormones called endorphins. A small amount of exercise can also help improve attention and concentration and assist you in achieving a better night's sleep. Making exercise part of your family's daily routine could be as simple as going for a walk around the block. You may find that your adolescents are more likely to talk to you about their

worries whilst exercising as there is less pressure on them to have to look at you directly if you are walking.

## Acknowledge your worries



In order to deal with your worries you need to start by acknowledging them. It can be as simple as writing them down or talking to someone about them. Once you have acknowledged what is worrying you, start to challenge some of these thoughts, which ones are true? Think about which worries are in your control and which are not. Focus on those that are in your control to do something about. Most of the time once you have identified the worries that are in your control you can start to plan for how you might do things differently. You can help your children with this exercise, again encouraging them to focus on what is in their control, giving them a sense of agency to reduce their worries. It

is also important to reassure your children that this is not a lasting situation, things will get better and eventually get back to the way they were before.

Focusing on gratitude is an important practice in challenging times. It can help to counteract any negative thoughts and encourage a more balanced perspective. As you sit down to a family meal you could encourage your family to identify one thing each day that they are grateful for, making sure that the adults also get involved.

## Use social media appropriately



Social media can provide a wonderful way to stay informed and connected with other people. However, one downside to social media is that updates come 24 hours a day and if we feel we need to be updated around the clock, it can leave us reaching for our phones at every ping of a notification. This is not healthy or sustainable. Take a break from social media or turn off notifications or perhaps try only checking once or twice a day for a set amount of time.

You may also want to consider where you and your family are getting your information from. Facebook may be easy to access, but the click-bait sensationalized headlines do little to alleviate worries and concerns. It is best to stick to reliable sources of information such as the World Health Organisation ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)) or the Australian Government Department of Health ([www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)).

Social media can be a wonderful way to stay connected with loved ones, both local and afar during this time. Make time to send a simple text message to check in with someone, a facetime or skype call, or a good old-fashioned phone call. Encourage your children to stay connected to their friends and family using appropriate social media too, it is important for their wellbeing and feeling connected with others outside of the home.

## Relaxation techniques



The best way to relax is to do the things that you like to do, such as reading, listening to music, exercise, watching a movie, cooking, playing a musical instrument, socialising (using social media at this time), gardening, craft activities, or anything else you find enjoyable.

There may be times when you can't do your favourite activities, or they just aren't evoking that sense of relaxation that they once did. In these instances, you could consider a relaxation technique such as deep breathing, guided relaxation, meditation or mindfulness. Please see the links for further information.

## Wellbeing Activities

<p><b>Cooking/Baking</b> Cook a meal or bake something and get your classmates to do the same &amp; post pics &amp; recipes to each other</p>	<p><b>Listen to music</b> Create a playlist of uplifting music that makes you feel good</p>
<p><b>Drawing</b> Draw for fun or learn to draw new things from youtube clips</p>	<p><b>Go for a walk</b> Keep active Do a mindfulness walk where you take notice of how many birds/cars you see/hear</p>
<p><b>Puzzles</b> Actual puzzles, sudoku, or crosswords</p>	<p><b>Jump on the trampoline</b> Keep active and get fresh air Try a new trick or combo</p>
<p><b>Read</b> Google some thing you're interested in and read about it, read a book you have already read and see if you notice anything different</p>	<p><b>Kick a ball</b> Get outside and play</p>
<p><b>Lego</b> Try the Lego challenge</p>	<p><b>Ride a bike</b> Make yourself up a little track in the backyard or build a little jump</p>
<p><b>Journal</b> Keep a record of your thoughts and feelings about what is going on at the moment</p>	<p><b>Ride a scooter</b> Try an new trick, time yourself</p>
<p><b>Colour-in</b> Google mindful colouring or google image a character followed by colour-in, colour-in app</p>	<p><b>Exercises</b> Come up with an exercise list e.g. 10 star jumps, 2 push-ups, 10 sit-ups</p>
<p><b>Use a wellbeing app</b> See list of wellbeing apps or ask your teacher or wellbeing assistant</p>	<p><b>Yoga</b> Google kids yoga for exercises or youtube yoga, or yoga app</p>
<p><b>Organise a space e.g. drawer/cupboard</b> Clearing out and decluttering reduces anxiety</p>	<p><b>Sleep</b> Make sure you are getting enough sleep, crate a healthy bedtime routine</p>
<p><b>Eat outside</b> Take a break outdoors</p>	<p><b>Play outside</b> Be creative outside</p>
<p><b>Watch TV or Movie</b> Put on your favourite show or watch something new</p>	<p><b>Dance</b> Put on some music and just dance or do some Tik tok</p>
<p><b>Board games</b> Get out a game to play with family or try facetime uno</p>	<p><b>Swim</b> For those privileged to have a pool or dam – enjoy!</p>
<p><b>Photography</b></p>	<p><b>Video chat with someone</b> Set up some time to be social</p>

Try the photo a day challenge or just take photos around the house	
<b>Craft</b> DIY skin care, make a fort, weaving	<b>Scavenger Hunt</b> Find things in your home starting with the letter of your name, or all things that are blue etc.
<b>Gratitude Notes</b> Write down things you are grateful for	<b>Cleaning</b> Clean your room/wardrobe/car then stand back and look what you achieved
<b>Mindfulness</b> Download an app or google mindfulness exercises to help be in the moment, refocus and reduce anxiety	<b>Random act of kindness</b> Try doing something nice for someone else and notice how it makes you feel.
<b>Learn a new skill</b> Follow an online tutorial or youtube something new you'd like to try	<b>Listen to a podcast</b> Find one in your interest area or try QLD health my amazing body podcast
<b>Progressive muscle relaxation</b> Check out <a href="http://beyondblue.com.au">beyondblue.com.au</a> they have mp3 downloads for you to try	<b>Play with a pet</b> Inside or outside, playing with a pet is rewarding in many ways

### Wellbeing Apps for children and adolescents

<p>Mindshift – Designed to help adolescents and young adults cope with anxiety</p> 	<p>Zones of Regulation – Avatar games to build self-regulation strategies for young people</p> 
<p>Stop Think Breathe Kids – Mindfulness missions for kids aged 5-10 years old</p> 	

## Wellbeing apps for the whole family

<p>Smiling mind – Mindfulness and meditation for both young people &amp; adults</p> 	<p>Breathe – Deep breathing Guide for young people &amp; adults</p> 
<p>Stop Think Breathe – Mindfulness for young people and adults.</p> 	<p>Happify – Games and activities for stress, suitable for all ages.</p> 
<p>Mood Mission – Coping strategies for anxiety and depression; suitable for all ages.</p> 	<p>Headspace – Meditation and sleep, suitable for all ages. Family subscriptions can be purchased.</p> 
<p>Calm – Meditation, sleep and relaxation, suitable for all ages.</p> 	<p>Gratitude Journal – Tracks things to be grateful for, suitable for all ages.</p> 
<p>Mental Stillness – Guided meditation designed for young people but can be used by anyone.</p> 	<p>Beyond Now – Suicide safety planning for adolescents &amp; adults (12+)</p> 

## Apps for adults

<p>My Fitness Pal – Exercise &amp; food tracker, most suited to adults.</p> 	<p>Daily budget- financial app for adults</p> 
<p>12 steps companion app- to assist those recovering from alcohol or other drug use</p> 	<p>Moodpath- depression and anxiety test</p> 

<p>Mood tools depression aid</p> 	<p>Dare- break free from anxiety</p> 
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## Wellbeing Websites

<p><b>Beyond Blue</b> Anxiety, Depression &amp; Wellbeing info and fact sheets &amp; Online counselling <a href="https://www.beyondblue.org.au">https://www.beyondblue.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>Headspace</b> Anxiety, Depression &amp; Wellbeing info and fact sheets &amp; Online counselling <a href="https://headspace.org.au">https://headspace.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>Life in Mind Australia</b> COVID-19 &amp; Mental health info <a href="https://www.lifeinmindaustralia.com.au">https://www.lifeinmindaustralia.com.au</a></p>	<p><b>Lifeline</b> Crisis support and fact sheets <a href="https://www.lifeline.org.au">https://www.lifeline.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>Mindspot</b> Mental health assessment and treatment <a href="https://mindspot.org.au">https://mindspot.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>Reach Out</b> Anxiety, Depression &amp; Wellbeing info and fact sheets &amp; Online counselling <a href="https://au.reachout.com">https://au.reachout.com</a></p>
<p><b>1800 RESPECT</b> Domestic Violence support <a href="https://www.1800respect.org.au">https://www.1800respect.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>Head to Health</b> Anxiety, Depression &amp; Wellbeing info and fact sheets &amp; Online counselling <a href="https://headtohealth.gov.au">https://headtohealth.gov.au</a></p>
<p><b>SANE Australia</b> Mental health factsheets <a href="https://www.sane.org">https://www.sane.org</a></p>	<p><b>Black Dog Institute</b> Anxiety, Depression &amp; Wellbeing info and fact sheets &amp; Online counselling <a href="https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au">https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>Mental Health Online</b> Online mental health support <a href="https://www.mentalhealthonline.org.au">https://www.mentalhealthonline.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>Way Ahead</b> Online and telephone mental health support <a href="https://www.wayahead.org.au">https://www.wayahead.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>Mens Line</b> Phone and online counselling <a href="https://mensline.org.au">https://mensline.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>Australian Psychological Society</b> Peak body for psychologists in Australia <a href="http://www.psychology.org.au">http://www.psychology.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>Counselling Online</b> Free counselling for drug &amp; alcohol issues <a href="https://www.counsellingonline.org.au">https://www.counsellingonline.org.au</a></p>	<p><b>Relationships Australia NSW</b> Online &amp; telephone counselling for relationship issues <a href="https://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au">https://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au</a></p>
<p><b>Family Drug Support Australia</b> <a href="https://www.fds.org.au">https://www.fds.org.au</a></p>	

## Contacts

<b>Lifeline</b> 13 11 14	<b>Kids Helpline</b> 1800 55 1800
<b>Headspace</b> 1800 650 890	<b>Mental Health Access Line</b> 1800 011 511
<b>Suicide Call back</b> 1300 659 467	<b>Beyond Blue</b> 1300 224 636
<b>1800 Respect – Domestic Violence</b> 1800 737 732	<b>Domestic Violence Line-</b> 1800 656 463
<b>Child Protection Helpline-</b> 132 111	<b>CAMHS- (child &amp; adolescent mental health service)-</b> 1800 011 511
<b>MensLine Australia -</b> 1300 78 99 78	<b>Relationships Australia</b> 1300 364 277
<b>Alcohol &amp; Other drugs Service</b> Free counselling service for those affected by alcohol or other drugs 1800 250 015	<b>NSW Quitline</b> 13 7848 (13QUIT)

## Other important websites and numbers

<b>Department of Health</b> <a href="https://www.health.gov.au/">https://www.health.gov.au/</a>	<b>World Health Organisation</b> <a href="http://www.who.int">http://www.who.int</a>
<b>National debt Hotline</b> Free financial counselling <a href="https://www.ndh.org.au">https://www.ndh.org.au</a> 1800 007 007	<b>Moneysmart</b> Financial support <a href="https://moneysmart.gov.au">https://moneysmart.gov.au</a>
<b>Good Shepherd Microfinance</b> Interest free loans <a href="https://www.goodshepherdmicrofiance.org.au">https://www.goodshepherdmicrofiance.org.au</a>	<b>Services Australia</b> <a href="https://servicesaustralia.gov.au">https://servicesaustralia.gov.au</a>
<b>Community Legal Centres</b> Free legal services <a href="https://clcnsw.org.au">https://clcnsw.org.au</a>	<b>Catholic Church of Australia</b> <a href="https://www.catholic.org.au/">https://www.catholic.org.au/</a>