

# Mental health and wellbeing

Information guide



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## Purpose of the information guide

As we navigate our way through the pandemic, mental health and physical health are imperative considerations that require careful management. While we currently need to remain physically distant, it is more important than ever before to be socially and emotionally connected with communities, family and friends.

These guidelines will provide you with supportive tips, resources and reminders on how to better manage your mental health and wellbeing. By incorporating these into your daily routines, you will emerge stronger - with a positive mental health mindset and ready to thrive in a post-pandemic world.

## Introduction

Mentally healthy workplaces are positive environments where leaders and teams actively promote and invest in mental health and wellbeing for themselves, colleagues and community members.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics advises that mental illness affects one in five working-age Australians and is even more common among young adults, affecting up to 25% of this age group. In light of this, the University is committed to investing and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our most important asset, our employees.

The success of our institution is dependent on the individual wellbeing of each of our staff and this guide will assist you in understanding mental health challenges, provide you with strategies and resources to manage these, and information as to how to stay well while at work. It also includes helpful tips and resources and advice on seeking support services, both internally and externally to the University, to ensure you thrive in a productive and safe work environment.

The information guide is structured to provide you with mental health and wellbeing information and is presented in three main sections:



### Our work

individually take steps that will protect and enhance our mental health



### Our lifestyle

in keeping your mental health on track to improve your overall wellbeing



### Our thoughts

reframing of your thoughts and reactions to more positive problem-solving approaches

## What is mental health?

Mental health is an integral and essential component of health encompassing complete physical, mental and social well-being (World Health Organisation). An important implication of mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and able to make a contribution to their own communities.

It is fundamental to our collective and individual ability as humans to think, interact with each other and enjoy life. On this basis, the promotion, protection and restoration of mental health can be regarded as a vital concern of individuals, communities and societies throughout Australia and indeed the world.

## Understanding mental health

Work can make us feel virtuous about ourselves and give us a sense of purpose. It is an important way to help us to protect and improve our mental health and wellbeing.

When we consider mental health, what we are specifically focussing on is the concept relating to social; and emotional wellbeing for activities like the enjoyment of life, the ability to cope with stress and sadness, the fulfilment of goals and that real sense of connection with others.

Mental Health is more about wellness rather than illness. Like physical health, mental health is not static.

To assist you in understanding this more clearly, you can use a Mental Health continuum to explore this further.

Thriving			Unwell
Wellbeing		Emotional problems or mental health concerns	Mental health conditions
Occasional stress to mild distress		Mild to moderate distress	Marked distress
No impairment		Mild or temporary impairment	Moderate to disabling or chronic impairment

Source: AP Psychology: Creating psychologically safe and thriving workplaces

At the green end of the continuum individuals are thriving and able to display resilience with high levels of health and wellbeing. Moving to the yellow section, where individuals start to have difficulty coping with circumstances. The orange area is where individuals are having difficulty coping and symptoms may increase in severity and frequency. At the red end of the continuum, individuals are likely to be experiencing more severe symptoms and may be at risk of significant mental illness.







In addition to the continuum, researchers have also found that individuals frequently identify work as providing several important outcomes including a sense of purpose, acceptance within society, opportunities for development, and that it may therefore play a pivotal role in a person's recovery from mental health difficulties.

In summary, risk factors and protective factors influence mental health and can affect how and why individuals move back and forth along the continuum. This movement is not always linear which means that individuals may move from thriving to unwell and everything in between. External risk factors can increase the strain on our mental health while protective factors can counteract these assisting individuals to remain well or to return to health again.

## Mental health during coronavirus

As the news that a second wave emerges, some of you will be staying at home for extended periods of time, it is even more important to keep on top of your mental health.

Many people will be unable to see their friends and family and they are the first people that will notice changes in their ability to cope with these circumstances. Adapted from the resource provided by the Blackdog Institute, here are six tips you can adopt to assist you to manage your own mental health:

<b>Emotions</b>		<p>Set an alarm on your phone, or a reminder in your calendar, when you can quickly do a check-in on a scale from 0 ('not at all') to 10 ('extremely') of how stressed, anxious or down you are feeling.</p> <p>It is normal for these scores to go up and down each day and throughout the week but if you notice the scores are increasing and remaining very high, then it's time to prioritise your mental health.</p>
<b>Body</b>		<p>Take a moment to notice any tension in your body like tight shoulders, chest, or jaw. Other signs that you might be feeling stressed include a racing heart.</p>
<b>Sleep</b>		<p>Have there been changes in your sleeping patterns? If you are constantly struggling to get to sleep, waking in the night or waking earlier than usual and finding it difficult to get back to sleep, these are signs your mind is unable to switch off and relax.</p>
<b>Thoughts</b>		<p>Are you worrying about the worst-case scenarios? Wondering if things will get better or if you will be able to cope? Focusing on the 'what if' scenarios is not useful and it is best to try to limit this as much as possible.</p>
<b>Reactions/behaviour</b>		<p>Every day brings challenges but it is how we deal with them which shows how you are coping. If you find yourself frequently snapping at those you love, finding it extremely difficult to focus, or always depending on things like alcohol or food to cope, it is time to prioritise your mental wellbeing</p>
<b>Check-in buddy</b>		<p>Choose a check-in buddy. This may be your partner, housemate or even a friend/ colleague you are keeping in touch with via videoconferencing. Be honest about how you are coping. Remember that you are in physical isolation, not social isolation. When at home, you may need to be creative about adapting the strategies. For example, if socialising assists your mood, schedule a virtual coffee. If going to the gym helps you reduce stress, try an online workout.</p>

A very helpful resource to document the above tips and identify any changes in your ability to cope, can be located in [Appendix 1: Weekly personal mental health check-in template](#).

After completing the template, you may find that you have had changes in your behaviour that indicates that you may not be coping so well. [Appendix 2: How create a self-care plan guide](#).



While much of our working environment is determined by others, individually we can take steps that will help to protect and enhance our mental health and wellbeing.

All employees can adopt some common strategies to help in their work roles.

## Limit working additional hours

Deadlines at work can sometimes mean we are unable to always work standard hours of work, however when long hours become the norm rather than the exception they can negatively impact our health.

If it's becoming more normal to be working extra hours, discuss your duties with your manager.

## Take regular breaks

Getting some fresh air or simply moving from your work area can assist you to be more productive at work.

## Take annual leave to rejuvenate and refresh

Having a break from work has mental and physical health benefits. Taking a holiday can help to reduce work-related stress and increase work performance and productivity.

## Set realistic deadlines and deliver on them

Managing your schedule will not only contribute to improved productivity, it will also help you improve the quality of your work without unnecessary pressure.

While any schedule is subject to change and few things run perfectly, following a process can assist you in meeting your objectives.

## Sometimes, it is OK to say 'no'

It's not always easy to say no. We all like to be seen as a 'can-do' person in the workplace, but we all have the right to set work limits when demands exceed our capacity to deliver.

Don't be afraid to say no and state your reasons. When your response is genuine it won't mean you are letting your team down. It's more likely to simply mean the task will be completed in another way and you'll be in a better position to say yes the next time.

## Have a technology shutdown

Many of us are required to work outside our normal working hours from time to time. But we all need a break from work to unwind and de-stress. None of us should be expected to send and receive work emails at all hours, and both employees and managers need to ensure a culture of endless email-checking doesn't become ingrained.

## Make use of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

The EAP Program is available to assist employees with personal and work-related issues that may impact their job performance, health, mental and emotional wellbeing.

You may find it useful to discuss your concerns with someone and this free service is available to you to support you navigate your way through our current circumstances.

### Tips for working in a mentally healthy way ...

- 1 Limit working additional hours
- 2 Take regular breaks
- 3 Take annual leave to rejuvenate and refresh
- 4 Set realistic deadlines and deliver on them
- 5 Sometimes it's OK to say 'no'
- 6 Have a technology shutdown
- 7 Make use of the employee assistance program
- 8 Explore suitable flexible working arrangements

Adapted from: Heads up:  
Taking care of mental health



## Explore suitable flexible working arrangements

Flexible working arrangements can help many employees improve their general wellbeing by working in ways that better fit their day-to-day life.

These working arrangements need to be negotiated with your manager, and you will need to be able to do your job in an effective manner that suits you and your employer.

## Workplace stress

Mental health in the workplace affects our ability to undertake our jobs, and how it influences our overall wellbeing. So, it makes sense to look closely at how we do our jobs, while also recognising that how we manage our mental health outside of work is equally as important.

Stress is part of everyday life, and it is not always something to be concerned about. In manageable portions – like the stress we feel during a job interview or a first date – can sometimes assist us to perform and participate at our best under pressure.

Workplace stress is something we all experience, whether it's in the form of tight deadlines or workplace culture, it can contribute to us feeling pressured at work. Like stress in general, when workplace stress becomes overwhelming or is drawn out for long periods of time, it may increase risks to physical and mental health or cause an existing condition to worsen.

There is often stress relating to our work that needs to be managed but we must also remember to monitor the stresses in our personal life, too. Learning to identify when we are stressed – so that we can avoid or manage these situations – is an important way to stay well.

Everyone is different, – at home and at work – and there is no single best approach to staying mentally well, but there are several things we can do every day to improve our wellbeing.

## Avoiding burnout in uncertain times

This new reality has distorted the barrier between our professional and personal lives, making it increasingly challenging to set a healthy, balanced lifestyle. It has increased the risk of burnout, and it is now more important than ever to draw a line between our professional and personal lives, especially for our mental health.

## What is burnout?

Taking on too many tasks, information overload, working long hours, being over committed and having to meet tight deadlines are common causes of stress. If you experience stress over significant periods of time, it can cause burnout. Burnout is a state of mental, emotional and physical exhaustion that results from a substantial and prolonged stress.

Burnout is made up of three key constituents:

- feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion;
- increased mental distance from your job, or feelings of negativism or cynicism related to your job; and
- reduced professional efficacy.

### Some tips for breaks ...

1

Take a break once an hour to increase the quality of your work

2

Leave your workspace during lunch to stay refreshed

3

Exercise at lunchtime to boost your work productivity for the remainder of the afternoon

4

Use breaks to help re-focus

5

Take time out for an afternoon beverage and healthy snack

Adapted from: Heads up:  
Taking care of mental health



## Support available

- [Home learning flexibility options \(pdf, 183kb\)](#)
- [Daily activity planner](#)
- Visit the [Health and Wellbeing resources](#) webpage
- Contact our employee assistance program (EAP). The service is available 24-hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week by phoning 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327) or 03 8681 2444.

- Ask yourself if you really need to be contactable 24-hours-a-day
- If possible, avoid adding work emails to your personal handheld device
- Try being strict with yourself about when you check your emails – don't make it a habit outside of work
- Lead by example – don't let late-night emails become part of your work culture
- If you're not able to respond to all urgent or important emails during your work day, it may be a sign that your workload is too high. You might need to discuss this with your manager.

## Tips to avoid burnout ...

- 1 Prioritise your own wellbeing and ensure you embrace the things that make you happy (e.g. friends, family and exercise)
- 2 Reach out to your colleagues or network – you are not alone
- 3 Remind yourself and others that you are doing your best in a challenging situation
- 4 Put 'recovery time' in your calendar and stick to it. This time can be used to pause and reflect on your day and how you are feeling, or to make sure you are on track with your daily tasks
- 5 Remember, if you do not take time to recover, you are reducing your output in the long run
- 6 Devote your time to top priority tasks, designate time for those 'quick tasks' that can often get in the way

Adapted from: Heads up: Taking care of mental health





## Why maintain and improve your wellbeing?

Wellbeing is your personal sense of health and life satisfaction. It is based on how you feel about yourself, the quality of your relationships and your ability to manage feelings and work through difficult situations.

The best thing about wellbeing is that many of the factors are interconnected and there are many simple ways in which people can improve their wellbeing. Some of these are:

<b>Emotional wellbeing</b>	Supports our resilience, ability to cope with stress and to recover from disappointments. Mindfulness and meditation both train the brain to focus on the present and avoid tendencies to worry or let your thoughts wander.
<b>Social wellbeing</b>	This is the ability to communicate, develop connections and relationships with others and maintain a support network; each of which can help you overcome loneliness. Being kind to others creates a sense of purpose and connectedness. Applying gratitude for what we have also enhances our sense of wellbeing.
<b>Physical wellbeing</b>	Ability to improve the functioning of your body through healthy eating, good exercise habits and sleep. Research shows that time outdoors and in nature is good not only for our physical wellbeing but also for our emotional wellbeing.
<b>Societal wellbeing</b>	Seeing ourselves as part of a broader community to which we support and contribute with compassion, fairness and kindness also strongly supports our own individual wellbeing
<b>Workplace wellbeing</b>	Work life balance to gain a sense of purpose, pursue your interests Through developing connections and relationships at work – especially in a digital environment, social wellbeing is enhanced

## Suggestions for supporting your wellbeing

- For information, ideas and resources on kindness, mindfulness and meditations, try the '[community wellbeing resources at My Digital Health](#)'. There are also great mindfulness smartphone apps such as [Headspace](#) and [SmilingMind](#). Alternatively, focus on your favourite book, taking photos, gardening or something that brings you joy.
- Explore local walking tracks, try mindful walking, say hello to people as you walk past, download the [FedMoves smartphone app](#) and participate in their free, live streamed pilates, HIIT and Body Stretch exercises or do one of their exercise programs at home, or try [Yoga with Adriene](#).
- Bake or cook a homemade meal. Try a new recipe, share with your neighbour, do a virtual bake-off with a friend. [The Heart Foundation](#) offer plenty of great, healthy recipes.
- Consider how to maintain connections with friends, family and colleagues – FaceBook Messenger, WhatsApp, FaceTime, phone or even send a letter or card in the post. This is a perfect time for reconnections.



## Practical strategies for improving sleep

When focusing on our wellbeing, sleep should be a priority. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started, people are reporting having more vivid dreams and disturbed sleeping patterns. [In this podcast \(3:24 minutes\)](#) we learn that the key is to tell our dreaming mind, as we fall asleep, what type of dream we would like to have.

Even pre-pandemic, two thirds of adults in developed countries were getting insufficient sleep and when we are sleep deprived, there is enormous personal cost in terms of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing. Sleeping less than six or seven hours per night:

- Demolishes your immune system – doubling your risk of cancer;
- Disrupts blood sugar levels so profoundly you would be classed as a pre-diabetic;
- Increases the likelihood of cardiovascular disease, stroke and congestive heart failure;
- Contributes to all major psychiatric conditions including depression, anxiety and suicidality;
- Increases weight gain and prevents weight loss; and
- Impedes reproductive success (in both males and makes).

After 30 years of intensive research, we now know ...

- the recycle rate of a human being is around 16 hours;
- after 16 hours of being awake, the brain begins to fail;
- humans need more than seven hours of sleep each night to maintain cognitive performance;
- after 10 days of just seven hours of sleep each night, the brain is as dysfunctional as it would be after going without sleep for 24 hours;
- three full nights of recovery sleep (i.e. more nights than a weekend) are insufficient to restore performance back to normal levels after a week of short sleeping; and
- the human mind cannot accurately sense how sleep-deprived it is when sleep deprived.

Getting a good night's sleep is probably the easiest workout that you can do.

### Tips to improve sleep ...

<b>1</b>	<b>Stick to a sleep schedule</b>	Aim to go to bed at the same time each night and sleep for no more than eight hours. You cannot bank or catch up on lost sleep. Consistency will reinforce your body's sleep-wake cycle. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes, consider reading, listen to soothing music. Return to bed when you are tired.
<b>2</b>	<b>Watch what you eat and drink</b>	Avoid heavy or large meals within a couple of hours before bedtime. Similarly, nicotine, alcohol, and caffeine can each impair your ability to fall asleep or reduce the quality of your sleep.
<b>3</b>	<b>Be physically active</b>	Regular physical activity, particularly outdoors and preferably in the morning or before the evening meal, can promote better sleep.
<b>4</b>	<b>Things to avoid close to bedtime</b>	Activities that are stimulating such as moderate exercise, computer games, television, movies, having important discussions, using social media and responding to emails and text messages should be avoided in the hour before bed. A brightly lit environment or the blue light of the computer can reduce evening levels of the sleep-promoting hormone, melatonin.

Falling asleep on the couch during the evening also makes it harder to fall asleep when you go to bed. For more fascinating information about sleep, watch [a walkthrough stages of sleep](#) – an interesting TedTalk by Matt Walker, Professor of Neuroscience and Psychology at the University of California.



## Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the process of focussing your full attention on one thing in that moment. It is that experience when you are immersed in what you are doing, without mental clutter, thoughts or distractions and can just focus. When we are practising mindfulness, we might focus our attention on our breathing and without judgement, set aside the thoughts that distract from this.

Applying mindfulness is a good way of calming the mind and managing negative thoughts and responses, particularly around past events or concerns about future possibilities - worries that can disrupt sleep or distract from other thoughts and activities. It is not about stopping or controlling thoughts or difficult emotions, but observing them without judgement. The thoughts can then be managed in a more positive way so that they don't become overwhelming.

While mindfulness might seem simple, as with many new things, it takes practice.

### Here are a few pointers to get you started ...

<b>Start small</b>	If you're new to meditation, start with shorter sessions to get yourself used to the whole process. Anywhere from 2-5 minutes will still give you the benefits of meditation
<b>Set a goal</b>	Meditation is a skill that requires practice. Try setting a goal to practise mindfulness every day for 21 days, this will help to make meditation a habit
<b>Use a guide</b>	Practising meditation with a guide is a great way for beginners to find their feet. Download the free <a href="#">Smiling Mind app</a> and try the Body Scan to get you started












### Practice 1



<b>Take a seat</b>	Find a place to sit that feels calm and quiet to you
<b>Set a time limit</b>	If you're just beginning, it can help to choose a short time, such as 2-5 minutes
<b>Notice your body</b>	You can sit in a chair with your feet on the floor, you can sit loosely cross-legged, in lotus posture, you can kneel – all are fine. Just make sure you are stable and in a position you can stay in for a while
<b>Feel your breath</b>	Follow the sensation of your breath as it goes out and as it goes in
<b>Notice when your mind has wandered</b>	Inevitably, your attention will leave the sensations of the breath and wander to other places. When you notice this—in a few seconds, a minute, five minutes—simply return your attention to the breath
<b>Be kind to your wandering mind</b>	Don't judge yourself or obsess over the content of the thoughts you find yourself lost in. Just come back



From **Thursday 30 July** for the next several weeks, the University will host online mindfulness sessions, and also offer a range of activities over Zoom including daily meditation, yoga, Pilates, high intensity interval training (HIIT) and stretch classes for you to try. To register, please email [hr@federation.edu.au](mailto:hr@federation.edu.au).

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Mornings</b>		 Meditation 9:30 am	 Meditation 9:15 am	 Meditation 9:15 am	 Yoga 9:15 am
<b>Afternoons</b>	 Pilates 12:00 pm   Meditation 4:45 pm		 HIIT 12:00 pm   Yoga 12:30 pm		 Body Stretch 12:00 pm   Meditation 12:30 pm
<b>On-demand sessions</b>	Yoga by Adreinne – free yoga sessions: <a href="https://yogawithadriene.com/free-yoga-videos/">https://yogawithadriene.com/free-yoga-videos/</a> Sam Wood – free home workouts: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/SamWoodTV/featured">https://www.youtube.com/c/SamWoodTV/featured</a>				

We also encourage you to explore the following further mindfulness apps and resources:

- [My Digital Health: community 'wellbeing' resources](#)
- [Beyond Blue Relaxation Exercises](#)
- [Mindfulness and Wellbeing for Peak Performance learning module](#)

## Self-care

Self-care is often the first thing that is sacrificed when life is busy. Looking after yourself is one of the most important contributions you can make to your wellness, and to those you love. It allows you to monitor yourself to maintain control of reactions and behaviours.

A self-care plan can help you enhance your health and wellbeing, manage your stress, maintain personal and professional interests, and help you get through the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learn to identify activities and practices that support your wellbeing and help you to sustain positive self-care in the long-term. This will help you to:

- understand self-care;
- develop your self-care plan; and
- put your self-care plan into action.

A template for creating a personal self-care plan can be found in [Appendix 2: How create a self-care plan](#).



## Stay socially connected

As we continue to practice physical distancing, maintaining a healthy social life can be challenging. In times of crisis and increased stress, maintaining and strengthening our social connections and looking after our mental health has never been more important.

Being physically distant should not be confused with social distance or isolation. Although you may not be able to physically stop by a colleague's desk or visit friends and loved ones during this time, you can take advantage of technology to keep in contact.

## Importance of staying connected

Having positive social relationships and connections can have a positive effect on our mental health and emotional wellbeing. Our families, friends and colleagues are all important relationships in our lives that need to be nurtured, especially through times of adversity, such as the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We know we are stronger together - and there are a range of creative ways that we can stay connected, even when we must be apart.

## Make your catch-ups virtual

- **Schedule a virtual lunch.** Many platforms offer video calling and multi-way video calling, including WhatsApp, Skype, Google Hangouts, Instagram, Facebook Messenger, and House Party.
- **Have a distance movie night.** The streaming service Netflix is offering a 'Netflix Party', which synchronises the video and creates a chat. If you use a different service, counting-down to hitting 'play' over the phone and texting while you watch will work too.

## Try an activity together

- **Try a new skill together.** Pick a YouTube tutorial for a new skill, such as painting or drawing, origami, makeup, dancing or cooking. Recruit a few friends to all attempt the same tutorial and share your results.
- **Sign up for a fitness class.** There are free classes available online as well.
- **Do your 'been meaning to get to it' thing.** Most of us have something around the house we have been 'meaning to' get to – organise the wardrobe, sort through the overflowing cupboards, or a small home repair. Recruit a friend and exchange your before-and-after pictures of the task.
- **Play some games.** There are free versions of classics like chess, mah-jong, dominos and scrabble-type games available to keep you entertained and connected. For the tabletop gamers, there are several virtual tabletops available to help keep your social games night going.

## Diversity and inclusion

It is important to recognise the impact of COVID-19 on all staff, including those from diverse backgrounds including:

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander** people (particularly those in remote communities), who are at higher risk of infection due to factors such as higher rates of chronic health conditions and limited access to healthcare services;
- **People living in share houses** and people experiencing domestic and family violence;
- **Mature age workers**, people living with a **disability**, or people with **underlying physical or mental health conditions**, who may experience reduced access to basic necessities and medical services and equipment, e.g. due to supply challenges. Those requiring carers to assist with self-care tasks may also be impacted by self-isolation and social distancing measures. Such communities may also be more vulnerable to feelings of isolation and loneliness.



- People who are **carers** (for example, of children and/or elderly parents) who may be impacted by closures such as schools and other necessities; and
- **LGBTIQ+ people** with particular challenges such as increased risk of domestic violence, fears and difficulties faced by LGBTIQ+ people who may experience further marginalisation and anxiety.

## Resources available

There are specific support resources available to people from diverse backgrounds. These include:

- [Pride in Health](#)
- [Australian Department of Health – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) advice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and remote communities](#)
- [Australian Government Department of Social Services – Information and referrals for people with disability and their supporters about coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [SBS Coronavirus updated in various languages](#)
- [Australian Department of Health – advice for older people](#)
- [1800RESPECT – National Sexual Assault and Domestic Family Violence Counselling Service](#)



There are many studies that show that psychological therapies can help us to manage the way we think and behave. These therapies recognise that if we can alter our thinking and look rationally at challenges that arise, we can shift from negative or unhelpful thoughts and reactions to more positive problem-solving approaches.

Situation	Mood
<p><b>Recall a recent situation that you found upsetting or difficult</b></p> <p>E.g. my colleague was abrupt and dismissive with me after I asked him to change something in a document.</p>	<p><b>What were you feeling? How strong was this mood? (0-100%)</b></p> <p>E.g. hurt 80%, angry 90%, frustrated 80%</p>

## Unhelpful thinking

### What was going through your mind?

Sometimes the way we talk to ourselves can be unhelpful or make us feel like we're not coping. Below are some examples of negative thoughts that we are all guilty of from time to time.

Black and white thinking	Challenging unhelpful thoughts
<p>'I must get everything done before I log off, otherwise everything will be a disaster'</p>	<p><b>Ask yourself these questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a close friend or someone I loved was thinking this way, what would I tell them?</li> <li>• Five years from now when I look back, will I see things differently?</li> <li>• Are the things I'm jumping to conclusions about justified by data and/or evidence?</li> <li>• What am I ignoring about my strengths, and how am I coping?</li> </ul>
<p><b>What-ifs?</b> – 'What if I put all this effort in and it's not what they expected? I'll never be able to look anyone in the eye'</p>	
<p><b>Spiral of negatives</b> – 'I'm not going to get the project finished on schedule, which means they will think I am not capable'</p>	
<p><b>Leaping to conclusions</b> – 'My peer was abrupt with me. He must be angry about what I said at the meeting'</p>	
<p><b>Over-generalising</b> – 'My manager has suggested give this project to another staff member'. My manager is unhappy with everything I do'</p>	
<p><b>Looking too far ahead</b> – 'If this doesn't go well there are all sorts of negative concerns'</p>	
<p><b>Unkind or mean to oneself</b> – 'I'm a failure, I'm a fraud... 'someone will see through me one day', and 'see I'm not all that great after all'</p>	

Adapted from: Heads up: Taking care of mental health



## Still concerned?

On their own, these indicators are not enough to confirm that someone has anxiety or depression. Only a health professional can provide a diagnosis.

If you believe that you may be suffering from anxiety or depression, take the anxiety and depression checklist at [Beyondblue checklist](#)

If you require further assistance and support, consider seeking help from one of the support services available to you:

Internal resources	
<b>Human Resources</b>	<p><b>Phone:</b> (03) 5327 9530 or contact your Human Resources Business Partner; or</p> <p><b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au">manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au</a></p>
<b>Employee Assistance Program</b>	<p><b>Phone:</b> 1300 687 327 or (03) 8681 2444</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.convergeinternational.com.au">www.convergeinternational.com.au</a></p>
<b>Manager Assistance Program</b>	<p><b>Phone:</b> 1300 687 327 or (03) 8681 2444</p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.convergeinternational.com.au">www.convergeinternational.com.au</a></p>

External resources (Australia)		
Service	Category	Contact detail
<b>Emergency Services</b>	Police, Fire or Ambulance – available 24 hours	000 or 112 from a mobile
<b>Lifeline</b>	Phone support for those in crisis	13 11 14
Kids Helpline	Confidential telephone counselling for young people aged between 5 and 25	1800 551 800
Mensline Australia	Telephone and online support, including referral information for men	1300 789 978
Suicide Call Back Service	Telephone and online counselling for people affected by suicide	1300 659 467





External resources (Australia)		
Service	Category	Contact detail
Beyondblue	Information, online and telephone support for depression and anxiety	<a href="https://beyondblue.org.au">Beyondblue.org.au</a>
Black Dog Institute	Information and support for depression and bipolar disorder	<a href="https://blackdoginstitute.org.au">Blackdoginstitute.org.au</a>
Carers Australia	Counselling and support for carers and their families	1800 242 636
Crisis Assessment and Transport Team (CATT)	Immediate support in a mental health crisis	Contact your local mental health crisis team
Headspace	Online and phone support services for young people aged between 12 and 25	1800 650 890
Head to Health	Online information and resources	<a href="https://headtohealth.gov.au">Headtohealth.gov.au</a>
Mindspot Clinic	Online or telephone support providing free assessment and treatment for adults with anxiety or depression	1800 614 434 <a href="https://mindspot.org.au">Mindspot.org.au</a>
National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation	Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services and Medical Services in each state and territory	<a href="https://naccho.org.au">Naccho.org.au</a>
QLife	Online and telephone counselling for LGBTI people	1800 184 527 <a href="https://qlife.org.au">Qlife.org.au</a>
Relationships Australia	Relationship support services for individuals, families and communities	1300 364 277
SANE Australia	Information on mental illness, treatment and support	1800 187 263

The following table can be used weekly to help you check-in with yourself, reflect and identify any changes in your ability to cope.

If you notice any changes, make a note of what strategies you are going to try to take care of yourself.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Area of check-in	Answer
<p><b>Feelings</b></p> <p>Have you noticed any changes in how you have been feeling this week? Give yourself a score from 0 (not at all) to 10 (extremely) or how stress, anxious or down you are feeling.</p>	
<p><b>Body</b></p> <p>Have you noticed any changes in your own body? Do you have tight shoulders or jaw, tightness in your chest, dryness of mouth, difficulty breathing or heart racing?</p>	
<p><b>Sleep</b></p> <p>Have there been changes in your sleep pattern? Are you struggling to get sleep, waking in the night or waking earlier than usual and finding it difficult to get back to sleep?</p>	
<p><b>Thoughts</b></p> <p>Have you been focusing on 'what if' situations? Are you always worrying about the worst-case scenarios?</p>	
<p><b>Reactions and behaviour</b></p> <p>Have you been acting differently to those around you or how you treat yourself? Are you snapping at those you love, finding it extremely difficult to focus, or always depending on things like alcohol or food to cope?</p>	
<p><b>Check-in buddy</b></p> <p>Have you spoken to your check-in buddy about how you're feeling this week?</p>	
<p><b>Strategies to try this week...</b></p> <div style="display: flex; flex-wrap: wrap;"> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Make a self-care plan</a></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do physical activity or get fresh air each day</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do something that gives me pleasure and/or achievement each day</p> </div> <div style="width: 50%;"> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Notice my thoughts and try to think in a helpful way</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Try an online program</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Get professional help when I need it</p> </div> </div>	

Once you have determined your personal needs and strategy, it is time to write it down.

Your self-care plan can be as simple or complex as you need it to be. You don't need to use this template, you may just prefer a list or diagram. Further information can be found inside the [Importance of self-care planning - fact sheet \(docx, 173kb\)](#).

Here is an example of how your self-care plan might look:

<b>My daily self-care plan</b> list your favourite practices for each category					
Body	Mind	Spirit	Emotions	Relationships	Work

<b>My emergency self-care plan</b>	
<b>Helpful</b> < to do > <i>List your top five emergency practices</i>	<b>Harmful</b> < to avoid > <i>List five practices, people, places or things to avoid during crisis or stress. This will serve as a helpful reminder to keep you on track.</i>

## Work

*e.g. Mark all assessments for BUMGT1501 prior to Friday*


## Personal

*e.g. Meditate or exercise for 30 minutes each day this week before work.*


## Connection/Wellbeing

*e.g. Call a friend or family member on FaceTime while walking after work.*


## To-do

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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