

Making a Difference Every Day

Here at Career Builders we wanted to reach out as we face this global period of angst following the WHO announcement of COVID 19 being classified as a pandemic.

During times of uncertainty it is part of human nature to experience anxiety, worry and panic. Given that COVID 19 is a newly identify virus, many people will be experiencing a normal reaction to a brand-new, abnormal situation.

As with any difficult situation connecting with values around kindness, compassion and flexibility can assist with the evolution of information, decisions and polices at a such a rapid pace.

The dissemination of valid and reliable information is essential in order to make the most effective decisions around the physical and mental wellbeing of workplaces, communities and individuals. We strongly encourage you to seek out valid information from reliable sources such the WHO, CDC and your state health departments website.

Taking care of your Mental Health

Ensuring you engage in selfcare during times of uncertainty will assist you to be able to manage this health crises with flexibility and adaptability. Selfcare can take many forms including exercise, sleep, social connection, and nutritious foods.

Those required to self-isolate will be at a greater risk of social isolation and developing a mental health problem, so we encourage maintaining social connections via technology in order to reduce this risk.

We suggest that workplaces allow Accredited Mental Health First Aiders extra resources to be available for mental health conversations for any employee impacted by COVID 19. We would also recommend following the MHFA workplace guidelines for any team member at risk of developing a mental health problem or with a diagnosed mental illness.

Here is an excellent resource from the UK which provides some practical suggestions on taking care of your physical and mental wellbeing for anyone required to self-isolate.

This week the Australian Government announced new Medicare items specifically to support those affected by COVID 19. The following bulk billed services have been introduced from the 13th March 2020

- Bulk-billed video-conference consultation services, which can be provided by GPs, specialists, consultant physicians, consultant psychiatrists, nurse practitioners and allied mental health workers for certain vulnerable people;
- Bulk-billed telephone consultations services which can be provided by GPs for certain vulnerable people (see items 91809 to 91817 below)
- Bulk-billed pathology services where a medical practitioner has requested a test for SARS-CoV-2 under a new item;
- Bulk-billed pathology services for a pathologist to test for SARS-CoV-2 and relevant respiratory viruses, if the treating practitioner did not request them.

Vulnerable/isolated patients are those where at least one of the following apply:

- (a) the person has been diagnosed with COVID-19 virus but who is not a patient of a hospital; or
- (b) the person has been required to isolate themselves in quarantine in accordance with home isolation guidance issued by Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC); or
- (c) the person is considered more susceptible to the COVID-19 virus being a person who is:
 - (i) at least 70 years old; or
 - (ii) at least 50 years old and is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent; or
 - (iii) is pregnant; or
 - (iv) is a parent of a child under 12 months; or
 - (v) is already under treatment for chronic health conditions or is immune compromised; or
- (d) the person meets the current national triage protocol criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection.

Health Professionals who are required to self isolate can also access these items numbers to continue to provide services to their clients. Please contact your health professional directly or the Medicare website for further information

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Taking care of your Physical Health

It is every person's responsibility to act in accordance with the directions of healthcare officials and government health bodies. Being aware of the facts can reduce uncertainty and ensure appropriate precautions are taken.

COVID-19 Facts

(Centre for Disease Control (CDC) Facts)

- The virus can make anyone sick regardless of their race or ethnicity
- Some people are at increased risk of getting COVID-19
- People who live in, or have recently been, in an area with ongoing spread are at increased risk of exposure
- Persons who have been in close contact with a person with confirmed COVID-19 have been advised to self-isolate for 14 days (seek leave, hiatus and avoid places of business until the full period is completed without symptoms)

Understand the signs of COVID-19 (any of the below):

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Seek medical advice if you:

- Develop symptoms; AND
- Have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or live in or have recently travelled from an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19

NOTE: Call ahead before going to any doctor's office or emergency room. Tell them about your recent travel and your symptoms <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/share-facts.html>

Actions to keep yourself and others healthy

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; going to the bathroom; and before eating or preparing food
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Stay at home when you are sick
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin

Important Links

Department of Health [health.gov.au](https://www.health.gov.au/) - <https://www.health.gov.au/>

Health Alert- updated daily - <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

For any other information, please call the

Australian Government's COVID-19 hotline on 1800 020 080