

Wellbeing for Elders during COVID-19

COVID-19

This resource provides practical tips for Elders to take care of their mental health and wellbeing during COVID-19. Staying safe from COVID-19 involves spending more time at home than we would usually do. While spending more time at home can feel isolating and lonely, it can also be used as an opportunity to grow your skills, take care of yourself and stay mentally well and strong.



Routine

Maintain a daily schedule or create a new routine. Try to commit to a routine that works for you and helps you stay busy throughout the day (e.g. Breakfast, read paper, make lunch etc.)



Monthly calendars

It's hard enough to keep track of what day it is during COVID-19, let alone keep track of appointments and make sure your Webster packs are up to date.

Ask your family to help you by writing important dates and reminders in your calendar. It might also help to write a to-do list and stick it on your fridge or somewhere visible to remind you of important tasks. Book in a regular time with family members each week to have a yarn over the phone or a video call.



Be mindful

Be aware of negative thoughts, but don't let them take up too much space in your head. When you notice yourself worrying, try to take a step back from your thoughts and be present. Take deep breaths to bring yourself back into the present moment. If you find yourself getting trapped in your thoughts, try meditating (see page 3) or call a friend or family member to have a yarn and take your mind off your worries.



Buddy up

You may have been very social before COVID-19 and attended an Elders group (e.g. Aunty Jeans) because you enjoy catching up and having a yarn with other participants. It's important to stay connected – If you don't have other Elders' contact details, call your local AMS/AHS, Aboriginal Chronic Care Unit or Elders group organiser, and ask them to help put you in contact.

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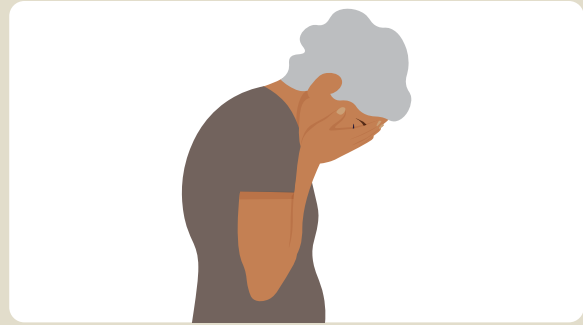




Coping mechanisms

Try to avoid using unhelpful coping strategies like smoking, alcohol or other drugs. While using these substances may feel good in the moment, in the long term they can seriously affect your physical and mental health. Try to replace unhealthy coping strategies with healthy ones including:

- Walking
- Reading and doing crosswords
- Cooking and making healthy snacks
- Meditating (see page 3)
- Calling your buddy or family for a yarn
- Gardening



Reach out

Don't let being lonely take over. If you are feeling lonely, reach out to your friends and family. If you are struggling, there are services that offer free confidential over the phone counselling:

Service	Contact
Lifeline	13 11 14
MensLine Australia	1300 789 978
Beyond Blue	1300 224 636
Headspace	1800 650 890

Your local AMS may also be able to assist. Give them a call to see if they have any services available, or to organise an appointment with a Mental Health Worker.



What is selfcare and why is it important?

Self-care is an activity we do deliberately to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. With busy lives, and the demands we have placed on us (and the demands we place on ourselves!), our bodies are often under strain and in a constant state of stress.



Stress less

Everyone manages stress differently. Here is a good exercise to make sure you have a balanced amount of tasks/ activities in your day that nourish your mental health. Write down everything that you do in a day from waking up to going to bed. Next to each item put an N for nourish, or a D for deplete, or an N & D for both. If you have more D's than N's perhaps you need to reflect on what more you can do to support your mental health and wellbeing. It's important to find a balance and manage stress in your life.

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Physical activity

Look and feel dead! Exercise has many benefits, not only for your physical health but also your mental health. In your brain, exercise stimulates chemicals that improve your mood and the parts of the brain responsible for memory and learning. Some physical activities include:

- Walking
- Dancing
- Gardening
- Swimming
- Yoga

During COVID-19, you can leave your home to exercise, and do other essential activities such as going to the doctors', getting groceries, and going to work or school. The social distancing rules change regularly. For the latest information and updates visit the **NSW Health** website.

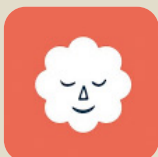
Meditation

How can we combat our need to be busy, and add some self-care into our schedules? Meditation is the perfect tool to add to your self-care kit, especially when learning to slow down and take some time for yourself.

Many apps have free programs or sessions that teach you meditation techniques:



Calm



Stop, Breath & Think



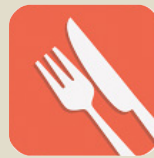
The Mindfulness App



Nutrition and mental health

Eating well is an important part of a healthy routine. Eating well is not only important for physical health, but also emotional and mental health. Recent studies have shown that your gut has a clear connection to your brain. This gut-brain connection has shown that a poor diet can lead to higher risk of poor social and emotional wellbeing, especially experiences of depression and anxiety.

There are many free apps that can help you plan your meals and offer a nutrition guide:



My Plate



ShopWell



MyNetDiary

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Example of a daily schedule

One of the most important reasons for keeping a to-do list is for organisation. Organising your tasks with a list can make everything much more manageable and help you to feel grounded. If you don't get to something one day, make it a priority for the following day.



Time	Activity	Done
8.30 AM	Take a long bath or have a shower.	
9.30 AM	Prepare a healthy breakfast and eat.	
10.00AM	Take a walk – keep a distance of 2m (2 big steps) from other people.	
11.00 AM	Read a newspaper, book or magazine.	
12.00 PM	Prepare a healthy lunch and eat.	
1.00 PM	Listen to the radio in your garden or on your balcony.	
2.00 PM	Do a puzzle or another activity e.g. weaving, knitting, sewing, painting or drawing.	
3.00 PM	Schedule in a phone or video call with someone (family or friend).	
4.00 PM	Take a small walk – keep a distance of 2m (2 big steps) from other people.	
5.00 PM	Try to do yoga or meditate.	
5.30 PM	Prepare a healthy dinner and eat.	
7.00 PM	Watch a movie, or the news.	
8.00 PM	Read a book and journal / meditate.	

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Your turn

(Remember to go easy on yourself)

Time	Activity	Done

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Wellbeing word finder

B E N E F I C I A L V G X Z A O B Y E S S Y T P R
H K A M E Q D Z C A R H L W S I P S A E H E C W S
P U X K U I P V N G V Z K H O C H Z M U P U S D O
D T P G E M O T I O N A L N V A I L I P H G Z I I
D C O M M U N I T Y J X Y N W R Z P P H B E C S C
P T B M E F T U W V C M O D J E G W U O V J M T E
N U U O V G L Y X Y C N U J K W L B C R W L L A J
T F T G D J D Y I C I G P V G U L W I I R J F N D
K R M S A I B P Q V R R H S F D O A V C C B S C T
H Q C O M P A N I O N S H I P I Y N L R P I Q I I
A A Q P S I X F J U X O Q O G H Y B C P L Q A N B
A S V O A A O Q Y T K B A A M X D O A L Z L B G Y
L C K E Z E K W D K O I U K V Q G V G W Y R O K L
S W I J N U X J U O V J T H M I P B H W I Z R B L
A W E K U T A G C L F T W Z C F Y M K I G F I U S
F W K L I S O L A T I O N F Q O C N B J O V G D V
E Q I A L W B N F B O C O N N E C T I O N M I K B
T H N F W N J W P L V L B N U G V S R Y P N N I C
Y F S I I M E S D I O F U G T U L H M S N F A X O
L R H S S I A S H O O U P D X G Y E R A T U L V M
J F I K O M K C S N R D R L B E Q Z T X Y X R I P
Q S P T O C C I C Y B Q T I W E L L B E I N G M A
V A L E V F I U T M F B H N S I V U K A W X Z N
R F Y E C W K A Y K L E R R P H L N O X H Z P O Y
I S X B N B C O L Z E S N H N B Y K G X Q A P R V

Companionship

Beneficial

Distancing

Connection

Aboriginal

Community

Wellbeing

Emotional

Isolation

Euphoric

Flourish

Wellness

Social

Kinship

Company

Haven

Safety

Care

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Sudoku

	1	4				7		
	6				2			
		5			8		6	9
								3
6			4	3	7	9		
							8	
	4							6
5				9	6	3		
1				5				7

1			7	9		3		
			2	8		6		
			4		5			
					4			6
			8					
	6							
9	1	3		5		4		
4	8	5					6	1
				4		5		

			1	7		2	6	
3			2	5				
6				9		5	1	
1	4							8
5		3						
				2	1			6
	7				2		3	
				4				9
		6						

7		4				3	2	
			9	7				
					4			1
9	3	1	4				7	
4		8				2		
			7		8		4	
						5		8
	4			1				
		7				4		

Rules

1. Use numbers 1-9. Sudoku is played on a grid of 9 x 9 spaces.
2. Don't repeat any numbers. As you can see, there are numbers already in each square, don't allow the same number to be in a direct line throughout the whole grid.
3. Rule out numbers as you go along. Use a pencil and eraser so that you can rub out the incorrect numbers.

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Sudoku answers

2	1	4	3	6	9	7	5	8
8	6	9	5	7	2	1	3	4
3	7	5	1	4	8	2	6	9
4	2	1	9	8	5	6	7	3
6	5	8	4	3	7	9	1	2
7	9	3	6	2	1	4	8	5
9	4	7	8	1	3	5	2	6
5	8	2	7	9	6	3	4	1
1	3	6	2	5	4	8	9	7

1	2	4	7	9	6	3	5	8
3	5	7	2	8	1	6	4	9
6	9	8	4	3	5	1	2	7
5	3	2	9	1	4	8	7	6
7	4	1	8	6	2	9	3	5
8	6	9	5	7	3	2	1	4
9	1	3	6	5	7	4	8	2
4	8	5	3	2	9	7	6	1
2	7	6	1	4	8	5	9	3

4	9	5	1	7	8	2	6	3
3	1	7	2	5	6	8	9	4
6	2	8	3	9	4	5	1	7
1	4	2	5	6	3	9	7	8
5	6	3	7	8	9	1	4	2
7	8	9	4	2	1	3	5	6
8	7	4	9	5	2	6	3	5
2	3	1	6	4	5	7	8	9
9	5	6	8	3	7	4	2	1

7	1	4	5	8	6	3	2	9
2	5	3	9	7	1	6	8	4
6	8	9	2	3	4	7	5	1
9	3	1	4	2	5	8	7	6
4	7	8	1	6	3	2	9	5
5	2	6	7	9	8	1	4	3
1	9	2	3	4	7	5	6	8
8	4	5	6	1	2	9	3	7
3	6	7	8	5	9	4	1	2

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