

## Self-care during the uncertain times of COVID-19

During the uncertainty of Covid-19, feelings of worry, frustration and distress are not uncommon. Changes are occurring rapidly across all workplaces, schools and the community and so not surprisingly we are all impacted in some way. In addition to this, as members of the Queensland Police Service, there is a great sense of responsibility to continue to provide service the community throughout these challenging times. Therefore, it is even more important to look after our mental health and wellbeing.

Some of the common challenges that people may face during this period of uncertainty include:

- Worry or anxiety about the health and wellbeing of ourselves, our family and our friends
- Change to our daily routine such as workplace, caring for children and balance
- Change to exercise regime, hobbies or leisure activities
- Working from home away from our colleagues and teams
- Uncertainty about our role and changes that may be required to meet the needs of the QPS
- Financial stress and concern about the future
- Prospect of needing to self isolate and what this means practically, socially and emotionally



There are several considerations that may assist as we move through this period




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| <p><b>Access to information</b><br/>Ensure that you rely on accurate information sources</p> <p>Manage the amount of time that you spend listening to and watching media. Think about getting updates only at a specific time of the day rather than constantly checking live streams.</p> <p>Use link<br/><a href="https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-resources?utm_source=health.gov.au&amp;utm_medium=redirect&amp;utm_campaign=digital transformation&amp;utm_content=covid19-resources">https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/coronavirus-covid-19-resources?utm_source=health.gov.au&amp;utm_medium=redirect&amp;utm_campaign=digital transformation&amp;utm_content=covid19-resources</a></p> | <p><b>Managing anxiety and stress</b><br/>Understand that feeling stressed is an experience that you and many of your colleagues are likely going through. It is normal to be feeling this way in the current situation.</p> <p>Manage your expectations. The current situation is unprecedented so be kind to yourself and give yourself time to adjust without judging yourself.</p> <p>Ensure that you invest in your self-care and top up your 'fuel tank' as you go. This is likely to continue for some months and so it is important to manage your energy levels.</p> <p>Use relaxation strategies that you know have worked for you in the past such listening to music, mindfulness, watching comedy or reading a book.</p> <p>Maintain a healthy exercise, sleep and eating regime</p> <p>Manage your thinking. Shift your focus onto positive aspects of your life if you find yourself dwelling on the negative.</p> <p>Make sure you seek additional support if you need it.</p> <p>Use Link<br/><a href="https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak">https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak</a></p> |
| <p><b>If you are required to Self Isolate</b><br/>Ensure that you maintain connection with family and friends often via email, phone, social media or video services</p>   | <p><b>Working from home</b><br/>Ensure that you set up a routine for yourself which may include getting dressed for work, having start and finish times</p>  |

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| <p>Remind yourself that the situation is temporary and why you are doing it.</p> <p>Set a new routine for the day, and include a variety of activities as well as set meal and sleep times,</p> <p>Plan, create and enjoy healthy meals, check out our <a href="#">factsheets</a></p> <p>Engage in gentle to moderate exercise routine such as yoga, <a href="#">stretching</a>, <a href="#">power bands</a>, Pilates and other in home training options</p> <p>Try new activities such as read a novel, or maybe start writing your story, drawing or sketching the world around you, try crosswords or jigsaw puzzles, painting or other artistic means,</p> <p>Listen to music or play a musical instrument, <a href="#">folks in Italy are already using this to support connection and healthy mood in quarantine</a>,</p> <p>Try meditations, <a href="#">relaxation</a>, prayer or <a href="#">mindfulness</a>, to look after your mind and thoughts</p> <p><a href="https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/d7cb8abd-3192-4b8f-a245-ace9b8ef44d5/20APS-IS-COVID-19-Isolation-P1.pdf">https://www.psychology.org.au/getmedia/d7cb8abd-3192-4b8f-a245-ace9b8ef44d5/20APS-IS-COVID-19-Isolation-P1.pdf</a> (APS Maintaining your mental health during social isolation Working from home)</p> | <p>Consider having a designated space in the home where it is agreed that you are focused on work tasks while you are in this space</p> <p>Ensure that you take breaks throughout the day where you step away from your work area and shift your focus to something different. Movement such as going for a walk may assist at this time.</p> <p>Establish regular times when you will connect with your team and consider using video linking such as Microsoft teams.</p> <p>Arrange a virtual coffee where you talk about non work related topics that you would have prior to working from home.</p> <p>Set realistic, achievable goals that you share with your team</p> |
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## Managing Others during times of uncertainty

As a leader you play a crucial role in supporting your people and looking after yourself during these times of uncertainty.

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| <p><b>Regular Communication</b></p>  <p>Take the time to check in with your staff personally and be open to listening.</p> <p>It can be tempting to be directive and task focused when you are in crisis mode, however, taking the time to ask and listen will be far more helpful.</p> | <p><b>Information Sharing</b></p>  <p>While many things are uncertain, be clear around the goals, expectations and timeframes required of the team, especially for those working from home or working in isolation</p> |
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| <p><b>Leading with Care and Compassion</b></p>  <p>Acknowledge that this is a stressful period</p> <p>Prioritise the wellbeing of staff</p> <p>Promote calm amongst the uncertainty</p>   | <p><b>Looking after yourself</b></p>  <p>Acknowledging that as a leader you are not immune to the feelings of stress that come with the current uncertainty</p> <p>It is imperative that you take the time to look after yourself so that you also have the capacity to assist others as well modelling this behaviour</p> |
| <p><b>Supporting staff working from home</b></p>  <p>Have regular check-in meetings via phone or video to maintain a sense of connection. Encourage team members to regularly check-in with each other</p> <p>Communicate clear and realistic expectations and recognise good work.</p> <p>Ensure the team have the required resources to complete the tasks you are asking of them</p> <p>Discuss openly and acknowledge the challenges of working from home (e.g. going to the fridge every 5 minutes). Together find solutions or challenge each other to solve the challenge.</p> <p>Be aware of any signs of distress and refer staff to support options</p> |   |

### Support for families

1. Others family members notice your reactions. Be aware of your own reactions and anxieties and fear response, particularly around your children.
2. Discuss the need to develop a new routine and then role model sticking to it. This could include hand washing, not touching your face, but also behaviours related to working from home.
3. Limit children's media exposure and be selective about what they watch and listen to.
4. Keep open communication with all family members.
5. Keep things in perspective – particularly with those that are anxious.

<https://beyou.edu.au/resources/news/covid-19-supporting-schools>