



## A message from Coordinator-General Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing



24 April 2020

This is the second in a short series of targeted newsflashes. Please distribute through your networks if you find it useful!

This week I would like to focus on our multicultural community. Our multicultural communities are impacted by the pandemic in different ways. Many have extended families in parts of the world where the effects of the pandemic are much more severe, and many are experiencing loss and grief of overseas family members.

There are a number of religious and cultural celebrations during this time. This week is significant for the Muslim community as it marks the beginning of Ramadan, usually a time of large gatherings. We know that our Muslim community are working together to ensure that the essence of Ramadan remains the same. The [Australian Muslim Voice Inc. Radio](#) Ramadan will broadcast this year to provide support for Muslims in Canberra (and outside of Canberra via live streaming) with talks, Nasheeds, children's programs and the call to prayer. Tarraweih prayers will be broadcast every night.

There are many in our community who have been financially impacted by the pandemic, including people from multicultural backgrounds. The ACT Government has established the [Jobs for Canberrans fund](#) to connect job seekers with casual or short term employment in the ACT public service.

The Red Cross is also providing emergency relief and casework support for people who are on temporary visas. To find out more visit the [Red Cross website](#). The Canberra Relief Network provides emergency food for families who are struggling. They are open Monday to Friday from 9.30 am – 2.30 pm, for further information please visit the [Canberra Relief Network website](#).

In the ACT there has been a lot of changes as a result of COVID-19, and we know that these changes are impacting women. The Women's Centre for Health Matters (WCHM) is keen to understand the experiences of ACT women and how they are coping with the impacts of COVID-19, how their daily life is different, and the impact on their physical and mental health. This will help WCHM to better inform their advocacy and to better understand women's needs. Their survey will take about 10 minutes to complete and all responses are anonymous. [Please click here](#) to share your experience with WCHM. It would be greatly appreciated if you could please help by sharing this survey with other women you know in the ACT.

Over the page is a list of resources and information that you may find useful, please share this information within your networks. For mental health and wellbeing tips, please visit the [ACT Health webpage which has google language translation](#).

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank all our workers and the people who support them, who are going above and beyond to support our community.

## Useful resources and Information for multicultural communities

- The [Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia](#) (FECCA) has collated a range of multilingual materials from verified sources to assist non-English speakers to learn more about COVID-19.
- The [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) have infographics and information sheets and webinars numerous languages.
- With the help of a fantasy creature, Ario from the book [My Hero is You, How kids can fight COVID-19](#) you can help explain the coronavirus to children. This picture book has been translated into 23 different languages.
- [SBS has COVID-19 messages in multiple languages](#). They feature basic information in 63 languages and presentations in 31 languages plus information from country of origin.
- [Companion House](#) is providing medical and counselling services but mainly through the phone. Please call first if you need an appointment: (02) 6251 4550
- The [Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services](#) are continuing to provide services via phone, however they ask that if you need urgent in-person assistance that you first call your caseworker or their office: (02) 6248 8577
- For mental health support please call:
  - [Beyond Blue](#) – 1300 22 4636
  - [Lifeline](#) – 13 11 14
  - Deaf Canberrans can contact Lifeline's Text Service on 0477 13 11 14
- Domestic Violence Crisis Service – 6280 0900
- Victim Support ACT – 1800 822 272
- The ACT COVID Helpline (02) 6207 7244 is open between 8am and 8pm daily.
- National Coronavirus Helpline – 1800 020 080.

### Key mental health tips:

- **Set up a daily routine.** Plan activities that are fun (such as reading, watching movies, hobbies) and that give you a sense of achievement (such as cleaning, completing work tasks, learning a new skill).
- **Eat well**—plan and eat a variety of nutritious meals.
- **Stay active**, create an exercise routine that can be completed at home, to maintain physical fitness and improve your mental health.
- **Sleep well** – good quality sleep is important for our mental health.
- **Stay connected** with friends and family via phone, chat, email, or video conferencing.
- **Be kind** to yourself and others around you as it could be stressful for your loved ones too.

The Office for Mental Health and Wellbeing respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people, we pay respect to their Elders, both past, present and emerging.