

**Media alert**

30 April 2020

Please cascade to all media staff

**Mindframe advice for safe reporting on issues related to COVID-19****Please cascade to all media staff covering Covid-19**

*Mindframe* recognises stories reporting of localised outbreaks of COVID-19 are of notable public interest and will continue to receive heightened and ongoing media coverage.

While provision of up to date information is vitally important, so too is sensitive and responsible reporting of details.

*Mindframe* acknowledges that contact tracing is an essential component of recovering from a pandemic and that the release of some demographic and geographic details are necessary.

*Mindframe* however, urges media to refrain from reporting that may cause further distress for specific individuals or group of individuals in relation to the transmission of COVID-19.

*Mindframe* asks to media consider the relevance of including information about transmission sources and the potential impacts that this may have on mental health and wellbeing. This is particularly important for reporting on details that have already reached saturation in the media.

**Helpful ways to communicate about COVID-19**

✓ **Ensure accuracy, context and balance of communication**  
Provide up-to-date and verifiable information about the disease, transmission routes, infection rates and vaccines. Include details of recoveries, progress towards effective treatments and community support.

✓ **Minimise sensationalist language**  
Ensure language being used is factual and accurately reflects public health definitions.

✓ **Include expert advice**  
Where possible and appropriate, obtain advice from reputable experts, who can provide accurate interpretation of statistics, evidence-informed calls to action and broader contextual information.

✓ **Include stories of recovery and community support**  
Stories of recovery and support can provide hope and a sense of calm for the community. Examples include stories honouring health care workers, acts of kindness, communities supporting each other, alternative ways of socialising or how people are recovering at home.

✓ **Provide a 'call to action'**  
Highlight actions that individuals, families and businesses can take to maintain physical and emotional wellbeing and to minimise further transmissions of the virus.

✓ **Avoid speculation**  
Opinion pieces or eliciting expert speculation about the future spread or impact of the virus can increase uncertainty or distress in the community. Factual information or graphics on what is known are more helpful.

✓ **Include help-seeking information**  
Provide support options for people who may be distressed by the impact of COVID-19.

## Support services

Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service: 1800 512 348 (24/7)

### Adult

Lifeline: 13 11 14

[lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

Suicide Call Back Service: 1300 659 467

[suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

[beyondblue.org.au/forums](http://beyondblue.org.au/forums)

MensLine Australia: 1300 789 978

[mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au)

### Youth

Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800

[kidshelpline.com.au](http://kidshelpline.com.au)

headspace: 1800 650 890

[headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au)

ReachOut: ReachOut.com

### Other resources

Head to Health: mental health portal

[headtohealth.gov.au](http://headtohealth.gov.au)

Life in Mind: suicide prevention portal

[lifeinmindaustralia.com.au](http://lifeinmindaustralia.com.au)

SANE: online forums [saneforums.org](http://saneforums.org)

[healthinonet.ecu.edu.au](http://healthinonet.ecu.edu.au) - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

1800 184 527 [qlife.org.au](http://qlife.org.au) - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and/or intersex

[mhima.org.au](http://mhima.org.au) - Culturally and linguistically diverse



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### Media self-care









To provide support to media professionals *Mindframe*, in consultation with the [DART Centre Asia Pacific](#), has developed journalism self-care resources. These resources can be found [here](#).



## Self-care for journalists

Every person will have an individual trauma response based on the type and severity of the experience, their age, gender, resilience and other psychosocial factors.

### Warning signs for seeking professional assistance may include:

-  Being unable to handle the intense feelings or physical sensations
-  Feeling numb and empty
-  Continuing to experience strong distressing emotions
-  Continuing to have physical symptoms of being tense, agitated and on edge
-  Continuing to have disturbed sleep and/or nightmares
-  Having no-one to support you and with whom you can share your feelings and emotions
-  Having relationship problems with friends, family and colleagues
-  Increasing your use of alcohol or drugs.

### The *Mindframe* project team





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If you find any problematic media coverage, please refer directly to [Sane StigmaWatch](https://www.sane.org/changing-attitudes/report-a-media-item-to-stigmawatch) for follow up:  
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