

Please cascade to all media staff

## ***Mindframe* advice for safe reporting on transmission of COVID-19**

Reporting on localised transmission of COVID-19 and compliance with public health orders is of public interest and will continue to receive heightened and ongoing media coverage. Provision of clear and up-to-date information is vitally important for our communities, including the release of some demographic and geographic details.

Media are reminded to consider the language used to frame information about transmission sources. Language that focuses on blame, guilt or shame, for example, may discourage people from seeking help when needed or impact on mental health and wellbeing. This is particularly important for reporting on details that have already reached saturation in the media.

Media are also reminded to focus on their mental health and wellbeing, especially as they continue to report daily on COVID-19 and its impacts on our communities.

## **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.

### ✓ **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.

### ✓ **Minimise sensationalist language**

Ensure language being used is factual and accurately reflects public health definitions.

### ✓ **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 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 help-seeking information**

Provide support options for people who may be distressed by the impact of COVID-19.

### ✓ **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.

## 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](http://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

Ongoing reporting on COVID-19 can impact on the welfare of journalists. The *Mindframe* team and the [DART Centre Asia Pacific](#) have provided a range of self-care tips for media reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic. This resource can be found [here](#).

### *Mindframe* project team

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