



# When and how to seek help for your child?

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about challenges we have not had to face before and has been a time of great uncertainty. This has caused significant stress for children and their families. How is your child coping? Are they experiencing more anxiety or sadness than usual? In this document, we describe what signs to look for, and how you might go about seeking extra support for child.

## SIGNS THAT HELP YOU IDENTIFY IF YOUR CHILD IS NOT COPING:

### SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY BE ANXIOUS

- Seeking frequent reassurance (asking repetitive questions).
- Avoiding situations or objects they are afraid of.
- Becoming upset or crying easily.
- Complaining of stomach-aches or headaches.
- Clinging to you or reluctant to leave the house or leave your side.

### SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY BE DEPRESSED

- They have low energy.
- They have lost interest in activities and things they usually enjoy.
- They make negative comments.
- They become upset, irritable or easily annoyed.
- Their appetite or sleep patterns have changed.

### SIGNS YOUR CHILD MAY BENEFIT FROM EXTRA MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

- Your child's worries or sadness/irritability are starting to impact their family life, schooling or friendships.
- Your child's anxiety or low mood is stopping them from doing things they enjoy.
- Your child's distress seems to be out of proportion to the situation.
- Your child's anxiety or low mood persists for longer than expected.
- Your child has been sad or irritable most of the day for two weeks.

### WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

#### WHERE SHOULD YOU GO TO FIND SUPPORT?

##### COVID-19 SPECIFIC HEALTH SERVICES

Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service

T: 1800 512 348

[coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)

Head to Health for more information and support options

[headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support](https://headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support)

##### GENERAL PRACTITIONER (GP)

Your GP can provide advice and connect you with other appropriate mental health professionals. To be able to receive Medicare rebates from psychologists and other mental health professionals, you need a Mental Health Care Plan.

##### SCHOOL COUNSELLOR

Your child's school counsellor is another person you can seek advice from. Contact your child's teacher/educator or school administration officer, and they can help you get in touch.

##### ONLINE TREATMENT PROGRAMS

Support and treatment programs are available online, particularly during this time where we are encouraged to stay at home. See our [Cool Kids Online program](#) and also the [Brave Program](#).

##### PSYCHOLOGISTS AND OTHER MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Others may prefer to work individually and take a tailored approach with a psychologist or a mental health professional in your local area, either face to face or telehealth. For those who live in Sydney, the Centre for Emotional Health Clinic at Macquarie University offers psychological treatment. Other treatment options are listed below.

### NAVIGATING THE MENTAL HEALTH SYSTEM

Finding the right help for your child can be challenging at times.

Many government and community services have long waiting lists (months, sometimes years). If you need more immediate help, visit your GP.

- Be aware that the first therapist you see may not be the best fit for your child. Persist until you find someone both you and child feel comfortable with.
- It is also important to speak to your therapist about the type of treatment approach they will be using and the evidence for this approach. For example, for anxiety problems, we know that exposure therapy is a key component of treatment, so it is critical to see a therapist who has experience in delivering exposure therapy.

## LINKS TO KEY SUPPORT SERVICES

### CENTRE FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH CLINIC

Macquarie University

T: (02) 9850 8668

E: [ehc.admin@mq.edu.au](mailto:ehc.admin@mq.edu.au)

[mq.edu.au/CEH-clinic](https://mq.edu.au/CEH-clinic)

### IN CASE OF A CRISIS, CONTACT

- **ACT:** 1800 629 354 – Mental Health Triage Service
- **NSW:** 1800 011 511 – Mental Health Line
- **NT:** 1800 682 288 – Northern Territory Mental Health Line
- **QLD:** 1300 MH CALL or 1300 642 255 – 24-hour specialist mental healthcare
- **SA:** 13 14 65 – Mental Health Triage Service
- **TAS:** 1800 332 388 – Mental Health Service Helpline
- **VIC:** [Victoria's Mental Health Services](#) – See website for services in your area
- **WA:** 1800 676 822 – Mental Health Emergency Response Line

### LIFELINE

T: 13 11 14

### KIDS HELPLINE

T: 1800 55 1800

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

### HEAD TO HEALTH (AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT)

[headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support](https://headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support)

### BEYOND BLUE

Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service

T: 1800 512 348

A dedicated COVID-19 [online forum](#) is available for people to share their concerns and connect online to support one another.

[coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au](https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au)

### REACH OUT

[Online youth forums](#) and [online parents forums](#) for COVID-19 offer peer support in safe and established online communities.

[au.reachout.com](https://au.reachout.com)

### MINDSPOT CLINIC

T: 1800 61 44 34

E: [contact@mindspot.org.au](mailto:contact@mindspot.org.au)

[mindspot.org.au](https://mindspot.org.au)

### HEADSPACE

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

### AUSTRALIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY

[psychology.org.au/FindAPsychologist](https://psychology.org.au/FindAPsychologist)

In an emergency, dial 000.