



IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON VOLUNTEERING

What a startling time we are living in as we work through managing the current COVID-19 virus pandemic.

Our Aged and Disability Services are committed to doing all that we can to support the health and wellbeing of all community members especially our service users, our volunteers and our staff.

In response to federal, state and health directives we have implemented changes and strategies to maintain the health of our community and combat the spread of this deadly and debilitating virus.

We have currently suspended volunteer involvement in our group activities and our big buddy community access activities. We are working with each of our volunteer host families to assess the availability and safety of providing respite care within their home.

With the early closure of schools we have made the decision to provide a reduced school holiday service at our Nordsvan Drive facility to support parents and carers requiring care to undertake work requirements. We will only be utilising staff to run this service and have reduced the number of children we can include to enable staff to implement safe distancing practices and undertake required precautionary measures.

I am sure this is a challenging time for our volunteers as you each look to how to adapt your lives to manage the current social contact restrictions being imposed. COVID-19 is forcing us all to make changes, to take extra precautions to stay safe.

Our Doors are Closed

As part of our safe practices guide we have had to close our doors for any walk in access.

Anybody wishing to contact our service will be required to contact us via telephone, email or video link up.

Inside this month

- ♦ Taking care of yourself during a pandemic
- ♦ What to do if you lose your job
- ♦ What to do if you have Coronavirus
- ♦ Understanding Autism
- ♦ Volunteer Updates
- ♦ Helpful Helplines

Lets keep informed

- ♦ **Australia Govt. The official 'Coronavirus Australia' Updates & Apps.** <https://www.australia.gov.au/>
- ♦ Daylight Savings Ends - April 5th
- ♦ Alert: Change Smoke Alarm batteries
- ♦ International Day of Autism April 2nd



Taking Care of Yourself during a Pandemic

By now you will have all heard about the importance of frequent hand washing / sanitising and physical distancing from those around you (not applicable to those you live with)

Just as important as looking after our physical health is looking after our mental and emotional health. There is a great deal of research that says the two are intimately linked.

1) Remaining Connected

While we may be required to remain physically distant from others there are ways we can remain connected.

2) Go on a news diet

Stay informed, know what's going on but don't get locked into endlessly watching "breaking news" on the 24-hour news channel.

3) Reach out to family and friends

Stay in touch with the people close to you.

Check in regularly with family and friends. Now, more than ever, people need to find smart ways to stay connected.

4) Eat nourishing foods.

Eating a healthy diet helps us to stay healthy. Include a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and healthy carbohydrates and proteins. It's simply about doing the best we can in the circumstances. Don't forget to spoil yourself with the odd treat as well, this is important too.

Many local cafe's and restaurants are providing pre-made meals. Why not support a local business and take a break from cooking.

5) Staying active:

The benefits of exercise for our physical, mental and emotional health are widely reported.

6) Choosing what you focus on

One of the things we do have control over in this time of uncertainty, is where we choose to put our focus.

Catching our thoughts when they get stuck in negative mode, takes alertness and effort, but has huge benefits.

This is a practice and like anything we practice becomes stronger the more often we do it.

Searching out the positives and looking for things to be grateful for in any circumstance, can have a significant impact on how we feel.





Lost Your Job or Your Income has Reduced

If you have lost your job or your income has reduced and you don't already have a CRN, your first step is to call **132 850**

There will probably be a long wait time but be persistent.

The service is open Monday—Friday 8am—8pm and Weekends 9am—5pm

You don't have to go to Centrelink to get a CRN or provide proof of identity.

Staff can help you with both of these over the phone.

If you already have a CRN, you can lodge a claim for JobSeeker Payment online 24/7

servicesaustralia.gov.au/covid19

Note If you already get a payment from centrelink, you don't have to do anything to get the extra financial assistance. They already have your details.

If you think you have COVID-19 symptoms. This is what you should do

If you are sick and think you have symptoms of COVID-19, authorities recommend you seek medical attention as soon as possible

If you want to speak to someone about your symptoms first, you can call the Coronavirus Health Information Hotline on 1800 020 080. It's operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Before visiting your local GP or hospital clinic, you need to call ahead to make an appointment. The GP or hospital will advise you on what you need to do and where you need to go.

infection Control Training - COVID-19

The Department of Health has partnered with Aspen Medical who has developed the COVID-19 training. To find out more <https://covid-19training.gov.au/>





Helpful Hotlines

Lifeline:

24 hour telephone crisis support

Phone: 131114

Beyond Blue

24 hour support for those experiencing anxiety & depression

Ph: 1300 224 636 or chat online between 3pm & 12am 7 days a week

www.beyondblue.org.au

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

MensLine Australia

1300 789 978

Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre: Emergency / Crisis Respite
Care. Ph 1800 052 222.

Headspace:

1800 650 890

QLife:

1800 184 527

Emergency Relief

The emergency relief program for those in mandatory self-isolation will be coordinated by the Red Cross in partnership with Foodbank Victoria and under the direction of the State Relief Co-ordinator.

It will start from Monday 23 March and can be accessed by calling Victoria's dedicated **coronavirus hotline** on 1800 675 398. The hotline can also refer people to other support services if needed.

https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/emergency-relief-packages-for-victorians-who-need-it-most/?fbclid=IwAR3-Kq12ea209iauupc3FQP0jOSggkP2D33MNSkyWq_ntgksr5gRYU25KM8

Links to ways you can talk to children about COVID-19

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/coronavirus-and-children-in-australia#talking-to-children-about-coronavirus-covid-19-nav-title>

<https://littlepuddins.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

<https://littlepuddins.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>



World Autism Awareness Day (United Nations) - 2nd April



World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) aims to put a spotlight on the hurdles that people with autism and others living with autism face every day. As a growing global health issue owing to its increasing exposure in the press and common knowledge, autism is an issue that is only gaining more understanding and WAAD activities are planned every year to further increase and develop world knowledge of children and adults who have autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

What's more, World Autism Awareness Day goes one step further to celebrate the unique talents of those with autism, while putting a huge focus on the warm embrace and welcome that these skills deserve through community events around the globe

Some Interesting links:

<https://www.autismawareness.com.au/>

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/04/1035931>

[How to Calm a Child with Autism](#)

[Create a Sensory Safe Yard for Children with Special Needs](#)

[Sensory Processing Treatments](#)

[Estate Planning for Parents of Kids with Autism](#)

[Classroom Accommodations for Kids with Sensory Issues](#)

[Moving with Special Needs Kids](#)

Some Facts about Autism:

Developmental

Autism is a developmental condition that is typically life-long. People with ASD experience difficulties with communication, social interaction and restricted/repetitive interests and behaviours. These are often accompanied by sensory issues, such as oversensitivity or undersensitivity to sounds, smells or touch. All of these difficulties may lead to behavioural challenges in some individuals.

Characteristics & Spectrum?

Autism is mainly characterized by its unique social interactions, non-standard ways of learning, keen interests in specific subjects, inclination to routines, challenges in typical communications and particular ways of processing sensory information.

The term "spectrum" is used to emphasise that autism presents differently in every single person. People with autism have a wide range of challenges as well as abilities.

The rate of autism in all regions of the world is high and the lack of understanding has a tremendous impact on the individuals, their families and communities.





Happiness Page; April 2020

Keep Calm, Stay Wise, Be Kind

See below for some wise words from the 'action for happiness' web page, check out the link for more information:

And if you like the perennial Christmas film '**Love Actually**' you might also like the Couch Choirs reaction to physical distancing; a thousand voice choir singing '*Close to You*', see link to a short article from the ABC explaining how it all came about and the youtube clip too.

...Also, if you like a good shot of public choir sing-a-longs with a healthy dose humanity, one of my favs, *Colin Hay and Choir! Choir! Choir!* singing 'Overkill' ("alone b/w the sheeps...goats appear and fade away")

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kCZKAxDoUwE>

KEEP CALM

There are lots of things outside our control. Let's remember to breathe and focus on what really matters so we can respond constructively.

STAY WISE

We're all in this together, even when we're forced apart. Let's stay connected and reach out to help others who may be in need.

BE KIND

Making wise choices helps everyone. Let's choose positive actions that support our wellbeing and help others to do the same

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/news/covid-19-how-to-respond>

Couch Choir brings light during coronavirus crisis with Close to You

"Couch choir brings together more than 1,000 people who submitted a video of themselves singing along to The Carpenters 'Close to you' in an effort to bring people together during the social isolation of CoVid-19".



<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-03-23/pub-choir-coronavirus-inspired-couch-event-draws-1000-singers/12080702>



Volunteer Updates

Key Word Sign -Links

With the cancellation of the Key Word Sign training sessions I would like to drop in a few links here for those that are interested in having a look in the meantime. Could be a great way to brighten your days, learning a new skill!

The Key Word Sign training will be back later in the year, when once again, a Corona is something you have with a slice of lime on a warm summers day by the pool.

Below link to Scope Australia, very comprehensive information /Basic Tutorials/ Apps and links.

<https://www.scopeaust.org.au/services-for-individuals/specialised-communication-services/key-word-sign-australia/>



15 Unexpected Benefits of Volunteering That Will Inspire You

Develops Emotional Stability

Depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, low self-esteem, and even Obsessive Compulsive Disorder have all been helped by volunteering. When people with [OCD, PTSD, or anger management](#) issues volunteer, they feel more connected to others. They have an increased sense of purpose. Connection and meaning translate to decreased symptoms and improved social function.

Read more: <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/unexpected-benefits-of-volunteering-4132453>



Can you Help?



Even with the advent of CO-VID 19, we are looking ahead to recruit new volunteers

We want to increase our Big Buddy program

We need persons 18 years and over to join us

A Big Buddy supports a young person with a disability to get out and about in the community and do fun things like going to the movies, perhaps even a concert, a sporting game, the local market or a game of laser tag.

Call us now! Encourage your friends and family to call!



STILL FREE - to everybody this Sunday - The 5th of April.



1 x hour extra sleep

Remember to...



Helpful Contacts

It has been wonderful to have more staff join Interchange and with that of course comes new roles and points of contact. To make things easier for volunteers, here are the main contacts to reach out to with your questions and queries.

Group Activities	
<i>Availability Queries</i>	
Group Activities Phone P: 0432 705 797	
<i>Questions</i>	
Meaghan Lewin P: 02 6057 8421 E: mlewin@umfc.com.au	
Volunteers	
<i>Questions</i>	
Keith Edwards P: 02 6057 8437 E: kedwards@umfc.com.au	
<i>Emergency After Hours</i>	
Meaghan Lewin P: 0419 447 993 E: mlewin@umfc.com.au	Jan Bence P: 0418 460 447 E: jbence@umfc.com.au

What do mean ?
"this is a wire-fi"



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