COVID-19 Coronavirus
Guide for Rotary Clubs

Updated 29/03/2020

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to inform Rotary Clubs in District 9820 to enable appropriate decisions and measures to be taken to protect the wellbeing of members and the public.

Since the first issue posted March 14th there has been almost daily changes to the recommendations and regulations from our State and Federal leaders as every effort is made to slow the new infection rates to save our health system being overwhelmed. The most important message right now for us all is to stay at home and avoid all gatherings of people.

We are seeing exponential growth in COVID-19 cases. Our duty is clear, do everything we can to support all efforts to "flatten the curve" so our health system can cope. If collectively as Australians, we don't then when the infection rate peaks, we will not have enough ventilators for everyone who needs one there will be unnecessary fatalities. Please do NOT treat COVID-19 lightly.

Controls put on Indoor and outdoor gatherings mean our clubs can no longer go about our normal business. We can no longer hold meetings or run most of our fundraisers or projects. Markets, whether indoor or outdoor (unless exclusively a food market) are banned.

A number of new links to information and resources have been added to this latest update and some of the previous content has been amended or removed for currency reasons. There is also a new section added to the end of this guide provided by ARH about mental health and anxiety.

Information & Resources

- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
  New measures to contain the spread of coronavirus from midnight on 25 March 2020.

- Federal Government Health Department
  https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert

- Victorian Department of Health and Human Services
  https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus

- Factsheet for people aged over 65 years
  https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/202003/FACTSHEET-People-over-65-coronavirus20200305.docx

- Online Symptom Checker tool from Federal Government Health Direct: Coronavirus (COVID-19) Symptom Checker

- Rotary Communication & Engagement during COVID-19 Membership Minute COVID-19 Response

- World Health Organisation (WHO)
   https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

- Victorian COVID-19 Screening Clinics
  https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19

- Professor Ron Rapee is a member of our ARH Research Committee. Here he provides advice about *How to Manage Pandemic Panic*
- Know the Signs poster
  https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-know-the-signs
- Stop the Spread Poster
  https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-stop-the-spread
- WHO video "How is the new Coronavirus affecting people who get it?"
  https://youtu.be/qF42gZVm1Bo
- WHO video "What can people do to protect themselves and others from getting the new Coronavirus?" *https://youtu.be/bPITHEiFWLc*
- WHO video "Why it is recommended to avoid close contact with anyone who has fever and cough?" *https://youtu.be/6Ooz1GZsQ70*

Our collective Rotary responsibility

- To protect the health and safety of our members and families.
- To protect the health and safety of members of the public we interact with.
- To avoid potential liability from failing to act or being negligent about our duty of care.

How do we discharge that responsibility?

This list is not exhaustive and not all are necessarily appropriate at any given time.

- By supporting the guidance from WHO and the Federal and State Governments
- By implementing strategies to limit the potential for spread of the virus (*see the section headed "How to help prevent the spread"*)
- By making our members aware of good practices to protect from and limit the spread of the virus.
- By cancelling Rotary face to face group gatherings and meetings
- By switching to online or conference call meetings.
- By actively promoting good hygiene.
- By actively promoting social distancing (at least 1.5 metre distance between yourself and anyone else).
- By including COVID-19 safety information into Club Bulletins and as well as on your Facebook and websites.

Face to Face Events & Meetings

- All should now be suspended

Advice from Rotary Zone 8 Insurance & Protection Committee

The following is an abridged summary of an email to District Governors Friday 13 March 2020 from PDG Peter Kaye, the Chair of our Rotary Zone 8 Insurance & Protection Committee.

Points to consider:

- Rotary organised Meetings, Markets or Events should be suspended.
- Rotary's public image must be that of a responsible Organisation, whose activities will not expose the general public to unnecessary risk.
- Where possible meetings are held electronically via conference call or video link.

Conferences, Events, and other meetings

- RI recommends that Rotary members and participants follow the guidelines set by the World Health Organization (WHO) and your national, regional, or local health authorities to protect the health and safety of our members and program participants.
- The Rotary National Insurance Policy does **not** include Event Cancellation Insurance for event holders.
- The Rotary ISR policy does not provide cover for any Loss of Revenue due to the cancellation of a Rotary event as a result of Coronavirus.

What is Coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which may cause illness in animals or humans. Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new virus that can cause an infection in people, including a severe respiratory illness. The most recently discovered coronavirus causes coronavirus disease COVID-19.
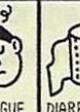
How the virus is spread

The virus is most likely to spread from person to person through:

- direct contact with a person whilst they are infectious.
- contact with droplets when a person with a confirmed infection coughs or sneezes; or
- touching objects or surfaces (such as door handles or tables) that were contaminated by droplets from secretions coughed or sneezed from a person with a confirmed infection, and then touching your mouth or face.

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Rotary
District 9820

Symptoms

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19, FLU AND COLD

People at most risk of serious infection.

From previous experience with other coronaviruses the highest risk groups are identified below. However, COVID-19 is being seen to badly affect some people outside these groups so don't be complacent.

- people with compromised immune systems (e.g. cancer)
- elderly people
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people^
- people with diagnosed chronic medical conditions (especially heart, respiratory)
- very young children and babies*

^Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience a burden of disease 2.3 times the rate of other Australians. This may increase the risk of severe disease.

* At this stage, the risk to children and babies, and the role children play in the transmission of COVID-19, is not clear. However, there has so far been a low rate of confirmed COVID-19 cases among children relative to the broader population.

To protect yourself and others you must:

- practise good hygiene
- practise social distancing
- follow the limits for public gatherings
- understand how to self-isolate if you need to

Good Hygiene

- Wash hands often with soap and running water, for at least 20 seconds. Always wash hands before and after eating, and after going to the toilet. Dry hands with paper towel or hand dryer.

- Try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue* when you cough or sneeze. If you don't have a tissue cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow.
  Immediately dispose of used tissues into a closed top bin.

- Avoid handshaking and facial contact with others

- Buy/Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser with over 60 per cent alcohol.

- Don't wear a face mask if you are well.

- Continue healthy habits: exercise, drink water, get plenty of sleep, and now is the time to quit smoking. Call the Quitline 137 848.

Social Distancing
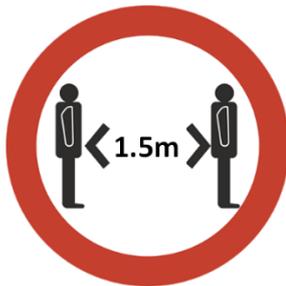
Avoid

- Those who have COVID-19 coronavirus

- Those who have returned from overseas and are in self isolation**.**

- Those who have had more than casual contact with someone who is in self isolation within the past 14 days**.**
  (Casual contact is described as 'someone who has been face to face for less than 15 minutes, or been in the same closed space for less than 2 hours, as someone who has tested positive for the novel coronavirus when that person was infectious')

Mental Health Section

Dealing with COVID-19 Anxiety

Written 20/03/2020 by Professor Anthony Jorm, ARH Research Committee Member and Rotarian.

Many people will be feeling more anxiety than usual due to the COVID-19 situation. As well as the possibility of becoming infected, many people will face other possible threats, including loss of income, shortage of supplies, unemployment, and social isolation. It is important to remember in this situation that anxiety is to be expected and, in most cases, will be an adaptive response which prepares people for action and protects them from danger. Anxiety is generally a normal and useful emotion!

Anxiety only becomes a problem when it leads to maladaptive coping, such as interfering with sleep, leading to excessive time worrying and interfering with ability to carry out everyday tasks. Below are some tips to assist in dealing with COVID-19 anxiety.

If the anxiety problems are mild, then they can be managed with self-help methods. Here are some to consider, which are supported by experts as often useful in managing anxiety:

- **Use Methods to Reduce Physical Tension**.
  Times of high anxiety can be relieved by exercise or progressive muscle relaxation. Regular exercise, like daily walking or cycling, can reduce anxiety. Online instructions for progressive muscle relaxation can be found here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TNdEb8VeBF4. Mindfulness is also useful when feeling anxious: bring your attention to what you are experiencing at that moment, and non-judgementally observe your thoughts, feelings, and sensations. There are free online instructions for mindfulness, e.g. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmFUDkj1Aq0. Meditation is good to do on a regular basis (i.e. not just as a way of coping at a time of anxiety) – whether it be mindfulness meditation or another form. A lot of anxiety is caused by thinking about future events that haven't happened yet, and mindfulness can help with that. Also consider trying yoga, some forms of which include mindfulness

- **Seek Social Support**.
  While some people can contribute to anxiety, other people can play a role in managing or overcoming anxiety. It is a good idea to seek support from friends, family, or others. More specifically, it can help to talk about problems and feelings with a trusted person who will listen and understand. In the current situation where social distancing is recommended to reduce the chances of infection, it is important that people do not become isolated. Phone, text and Skype contact may need to be increased.

- **Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle**.
  There are a number of lifestyle habits that can help anxiety. These include: engaging in regular aerobic exercise (e.g. walk, jog), spending time in contact with nature, maintaining a regular sleep pattern, having regular leisure time (e.g. pursuing a

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hobby), eating regular meals, and reducing or eliminating use of alcohol and other drugs.

- **Cultivate Acceptance**.
  With the COVID-19 situation, there is a lot of uncertainty, which can contribute to anxiety. In such situations, it can be helpful to accept that there will be uncertainty and questions without immediate answers. It is possible to practice accepting uncertainty, e.g. by not responding to the thoughts and feelings that go with it, recognizing it is part of life, bringing your attention to the present. All these efforts towards acceptance can make a difference to how much a person is bothered by anxiety.

If anxiety gets out of control and cannot be managed with self-help methods and support from others, then professional help is warranted. Because of the need for social distancing to prevent spread of COVID-19 and the increasing demands that will be placed on the health system, online therapies are a good point of initial professional help. Australia is fortunate to have some excellent online therapy that is freely available. The following services provide evidence-based treatment for anxiety disorders:

- **MindSpot** provides online therapy supported by a mental health professional. Treatment courses are available for PTSD, OCD and other disorders. It can be found at: https://mindspot.org.au/about-mindspot

- **Mental Health Online** provides treatment for Generalized Anxiety Disorder, OCD, Social Anxiety Disorder, PTSD and Panic Disorder. It can be found at: https://www.mentalhealthonline.org.au/

For other mental health advice during this time, visit this link: https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak

For 24/7 Crisis Support, call Lifeline: 13 11 14.

For Parents and Grandparents
Written by Dr Carly Johnco

- **Talk to kids about COVID-19**
  It is important to talk to kids about COVID-19. Ask children about their understanding and about any concerns they might have and correct any misinformation. Chances are that kids will already know at least something about the situation. They might have had exposure via media or social media coverage, overhearing others' conversations, seeing people wearing face masks, supermarket frenzies, they might have had to change some of their regular activities for social distancing, are being asked to engage in increased handwashing and hygiene practices, or they may be at home in isolation. They probably already know that something unusual is happening. Be informed about the current situation from reliable sources (e.g., Australian Department of Health, CDC, WHO), and discuss this information in an *age-appropriate way* (i.e., don't share catastrophic information or excessive amounts of threat information that might be too overwhelming at their stage of development).

- **Validate children's feelings**
  Remind children that it is normal to have some concerns, and that you are there to help them with whatever might happen in the future. Don't promise them that everything will be fine (you can't always guarantee that). You can provide some types of reassurance (e.g., scientists and doctors are working hard to keep people well, kids have the lowest risk of getting sick), but don't provide continual or repetitive reassurance as this can actually make anxiety worse.

- **Moderate children's exposure to media**
  It is important to remain informed from reliable sources, but it is also important to have a break from this. A continual barrage of information about COVID-19 will increase anxiety, for both adults and children. Focus on the things you can do now to enjoy life in whatever situation you are in, rather than continually focusing on the range of potential outcomes.

- **Empower kids**
  that they are able to do something to help in the situation. Remind kids about the importance of washing their hands, social distancing, sneezing/coughing into their elbow or a tissue. These are things that they, personally, can do to help stop the illness from spreading. Encourage them to call their friends, family members or neighbours, to cheer them up. This can also help kids stay connected with people outside their family and can improve social connections for others who might be more isolated.

- **Stay active mentally, physically and socially**
  Play games, do things that are fun, spend time as a family, connect with friends via telephone/videochat/social media, cook, clean, do schoolwork, and try to retain some normality in their life.

- **Be a good role model for how to cope**
  Children will look to parents and those around them for examples of how to cope. If you are panicked, this will have an effect on them. Model how to stay calm and manage your own worries. If strong feelings arise, as they are likely to do in stressful times, it's ok to talk to kids about how you are coping. E.g., "Mum is feeling a bit frustrated right now, so I'm going to take a break and go into the other room to calm down. Then I'll come back and we can

…… " or "I'm feeling a bit stressed out by the news report. I think we should take a break from the news and do something fun together instead". Allow everyone in the house time together, and also some space to be by themselves. Brainstorm things that each member of the family can do to cope with stress. As parents, stay connected with other parents to support each other and share ideas about how to #ParentInAPandemic.

How to Manage Pandemic Panic

Written by Prof. Ron Rapee (a member of our ARH Research Committee)
https://lighthouse.mq.edu.au/article/march/heres-how-to-manage-pandemic-panic?fbclid=IwAR3HU7MAYdMT959hRHljVJ44z3YoVmdTA8cZowinOK1adQuulRqGu6eXHYs

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