



**Coping with  
Pandemic  
Fatigue  
in 2021**

e-Book by  
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# Impact of COVID-19 and the Lockdowns

With the enduring events of the coronavirus, many people have found themselves personally and professionally challenged to consider their 'framework for self-care'.

Covid-19 has changed our ways of working. It is also affecting the psychological health of many individuals.

While people may react differently to the pandemic, characteristic patterns of emotional response to the unfolding situations across the nation are emerging.



# Pandemic Fatigue

After many months of dealing with the fallout from COVID-19, many people are experiencing pandemic fatigue.

Pandemic fatigue is a very real feeling of exhaustion stemming from the effects of COVID-19, including the different waves and several lockdowns.

What's important to remember is that it's normal to be feeling somewhat flat in mood and burned out right now.

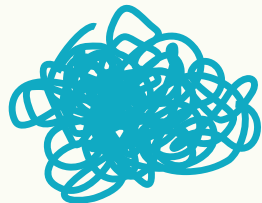


# What Is Pandemic Fatigue?

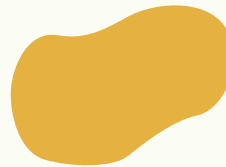
Wrestling with intense emotions day after day drains your energy, causing fatigue.

The fatigue can stem from a number of emotions you've experienced during the pandemic.

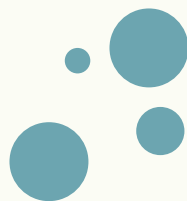
These emotions may include:



1. Fear and Anxiety



2. Ambiguity



3. Loneliness



4. Hopelessness

# Signs of Pandemic Fatigue

The hallmark sign of pandemic fatigue is a sense of inner weariness.

You may also feel:

1. Helpless
2. Sad
3. Worried
4. Frustrated
5. Irritable

You may notice that you:

- Eat or sleep more or less than usual
- Feel on edge or nervous
- Have trouble focusing (brain fog)
- Are quick-tempered
- Lack motivation
- Experience racing thoughts and rumination
- Withdraw from others

# What can you do?



It is important to gain some understanding of how to cope with these different intense, yet normal, emotional responses.



# Strategies for managing Pandemic Fatigue

1

Pay attention

2

Validate

3

Normalise

1. **Pay attention** to your emotional and physical needs.
2. **Validate** any feelings of anxiety, guilt, grief and trauma.
3. **Normalise** any emotional needs you may be experiencing.

# If you are feeling...



**Anxious,  
overwhelmed  
and uncertain**

Plant both feet on the ground, take a few deep breaths and think about what you **do** know and what you **can** do today



**Guilty**

Remember it is because you are a compassionate and caring person and you simply want to help



**Grief**

Try to ride the waves of emotion, express them safely, and be patient and kind to yourself, this will likely take many months to pass



**Traumatised**

Find ways to connect with your loved ones more often and try to focus on the present moment. Replace unhealthy coping behaviours such as alcohol misuse and inactivity with daily meaningful activities



# Next Steps

Take steps to renew your energy and to feel more in control.

## Wellness Strategic Steps



Take care of your body & mind



Establish healthy sleep hygiene



Acknowledge your feelings



Put things into perspective



Reframe your self-talk



Stay connected to others

# Create a Self-care Plan



The 4 steps of self-care planning:

1

Evaluate your coping skills. Make a list of all the things that have worked for you in the past.

2

Identify your daily self-care needs and make time for these.

3

Defuse from negative thoughts. **Reflect. Examine. Replace.**

4

Create a Pleasurable Activities Plan and make sure to include meaningful and creative activities.

# Create New Traditions

**1. Do something that makes you feel good physically, mentally, or emotionally.**

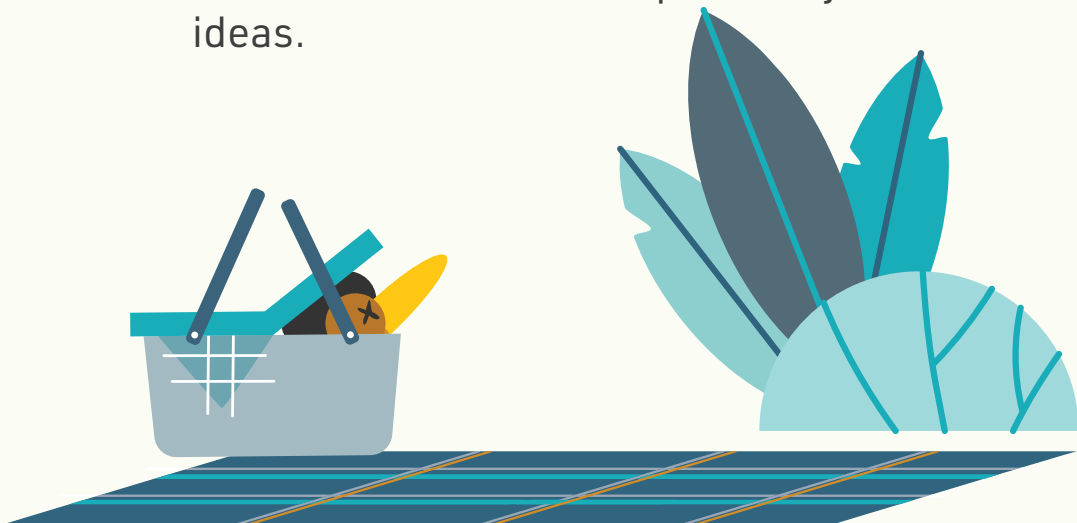
You might focus on a hobby such as playing guitar or painting. Nourish your body with healthy foods and pamper yourself with a facial. Do a work out from home or go on a walk or a long run

**2. Create some fun while in lockdown.**

Make Friday nights your family movie night or have a picnic in the backyard or balcony every Sunday. You can also organise a virtual mid-week check-in with friends.

**3. Let your creative side flow and generate ideas that work well for you.**

Start a vision board to capture all your ideas.



# Strategies for Managers & Leaders

Provide a supportive work environment that is nurturing and compassionate:

- **Talk about the situation:**

Include a discussion on stress and fatigue in regular meetings to educate staff about warning signs and to share ideas on effective coping solutions.

- **Acknowledge staff contributions:**

It is essential for leaders to recognise and thank staff for their compassionate care. This can be done in meetings or with a note, email or other gesture.

- **Adopt a flexible working model:**

Be flexible, especially with staff who are on their own or who are caring for people during these intense periods. Working flexible hours makes us more efficient and productive and can help us avoid burnout.



## Strategies for Managers & Leaders (cont.)

- **Check-in regularly:**

This is a useful practice following any intense periods or prolonged difficult situations. Process stressful experiences together, receive feedback and encourage and support each other.

- **Offer collective ways to share difficult experiences:**

Offer collective ways to share difficult experiences to assist in processing grief and expressing compassion fatigue.

- **Nourish:**

Encourage and model healthy lifestyles. Ensure staff take regular breaks throughout the day. Encourage walking and other exercise.

- **Education:**

Provide education and training about setting boundaries, conflict resolution, ethical dilemmas and self-care.

- **Develop a peer/buddy system:**

Pair everyone up with a buddy and encourage them to check-in on each other regularly.



# Tips to cope and build team resilience



Communicate with your co-workers, supervisors, and employees about job stress.

- Talk openly about how the pandemic is affecting your work.
- Identify factors that cause stress and work together to identify solutions.
- Talk about how to access mental health resources in your workplace.
- Remind each other that you are performing a crucial role in fighting this pandemic and that you are all doing the best you can with the resources available.



# Starting from today, consider a 3-minute activity at the end of each working day

1

Take 3 deep breaths.

2

Call out 3 things that were tough.

3

Call out 3 things that went well.



# Finally, seek help when needed...

## CRISIS & EMERGENCY

Emergency 000  
Lifeline 13 11 14  
Suicide Call Back 1300 659 467

## Youth Mental Health

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800  
ReachOut 02 8029 7777

## Drug & Alcohol

FDS 1300 368 186  
Carers Australia 1800 242 636

## Mental Health Programs

Grow 1800 558 268

## Mental Health Support

Sane Australia 1800 187 263  
Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

## Relationships

Relationships Australia 1300 364 277

## Mental Health Assessment and Counselling

Grief Line 1300 845 745  
Black Dog Institute 02 9382 2991  
Butterfly Foundation 1800 334 673  
(*Eating Disorders*)

## Online Services

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

eMH Services  
[emhprac.org.au/services/](http://emhprac.org.au/services/)

Hello Sunday Morning  
[hellosundaymorning.org](http://hellosundaymorning.org)

Daybreak  
[hellosundaymorning.org/daybreak/](http://hellosundaymorning.org/daybreak/)

References American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). Washington DC: Author. Australian Psychological Society (APS). (2010). Evidence-based psychological interventions in the treatment of mental disorders: A literature review (3rd ed.). Melbourne: Author. NICE. (2011). Generalised anxiety disorder and panic disorder (with or without agoraphobia) in adults. London: National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. World Health Organization. (2008). ICD-10: International statistical classification of diseases and related health problems (10th Rev.). New York.

e-Book by Dominique Robert-Hendren MAPS  
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 **Hello Sunday Morning**

[www.hellosundaymorning.org](http://www.hellosundaymorning.org)