

**Pushing Through the
Pandemonium Pandemic:**

**A Survival Guide for
Teens**

Content By:

Lauren Becker

Melissa Sbaraglia

Carmen Cheong-Clinch

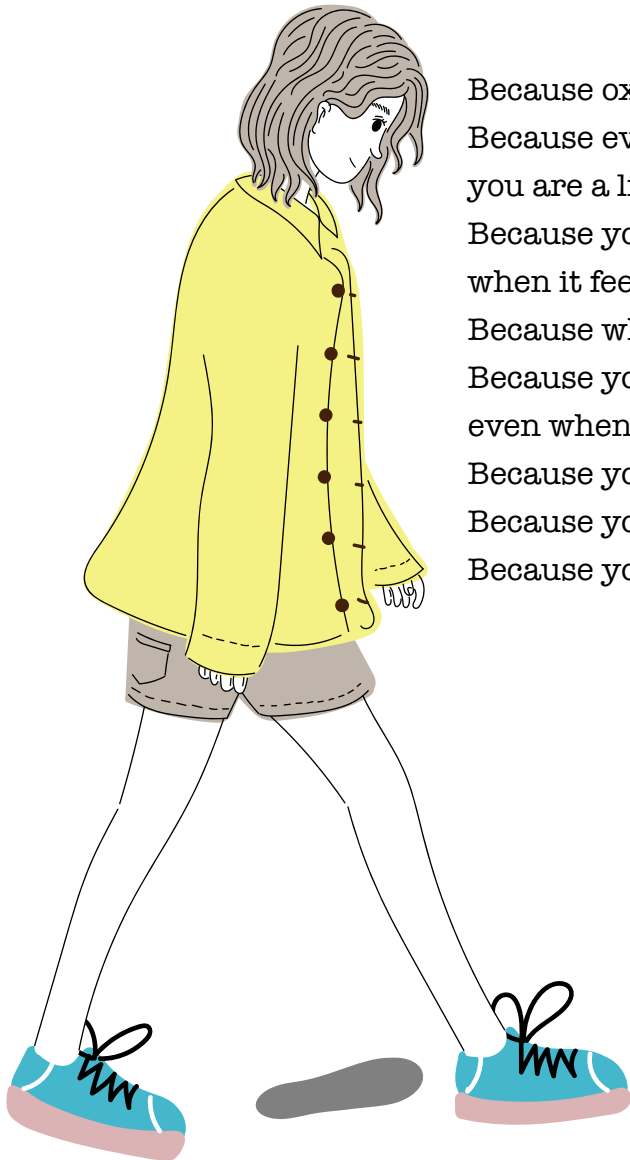
Booklet Design:

Australian Lions Drug Awareness

Foundation Inc & Tune In Not Out

Reasons to Keep Going

(when it feels like you're barely existing)



Because oxygen loves your lungs.
Because even when the world is dark
you are a light.
Because your voice is powerful even
when it feels like no one's listening.
Because who else can tell your story?
Because your heart beats with purpose
even when it's broken.
Because you belong here.
Because you are loved.
Because you are someone's reason.

So who wrote this stuff?

What would they know.

Although we might not be teens ourselves, we are lucky enough to work everyday with young people who are navigating these strange times, their insights and questions have guided us to write this booklet.



Lauren Becker is a Registered Nurse with experience in the mental health sector across New Zealand, and more recently across the ditch in Victoria and Queensland. She is particularly passionate about youth mental health and helping young people navigate big feelings.

Melissa Sbaraglia is an Accredited Exercise Physiologist with experience in youth mental health in Melbourne and Brisbane. Mel is passionate about helping young people use physical activity and exercise as a strategy for looking after their mental health and wellbeing.



Dr Carmen Cheong-Clinch is recognised for her longstanding work as a music therapist in adolescent mental health, educator and researcher. Her interests include young people's online engagement and interaction with music, and has collaborated with TINO since 2011.



And...

A huge thanks to the Australian Lions Drug Awareness Foundation via their awesome project www.tuneinnotout.com for taking our Times New Roman word doc and jazzing it up to look like, **well this**



Contents

Introduction	5
Checking In	6
OMG Parents!	11
The Good, Bad and the Very Addictive of Music	15
Get Moving	17
Wait, I'm Home Schooled Now?	23
Feel Like A Project?	24
Checking In...	28
Where To Get Help	29
All the Best	30
A Guide for Parents	31

Introduction

We know what you're thinking.

Coronavirus is a **major buzzkill**. It's ruined everything. 2020 has been cancelled and we may as well burn all the calendars.

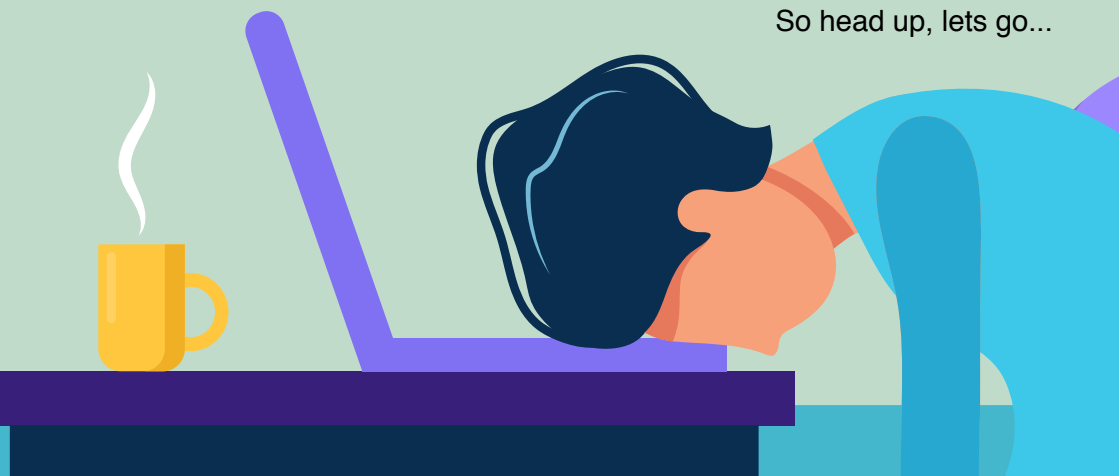
Feeling trapped in your house, alternating between bored, lonely, cranky and sad. Arguing with your parents because they never respect your privacy, trying to keep up with schoolwork online, and living on war rations because it's day seven of the weekly supermarket shop. You never thought you'd miss organised sports days at school but here you are, walking in circles around your backyard like a headless chook.

It's hard for anyone to feel alive when you're just existing behind closed doors.

We want to help! In this book you'll find some helpful tips on keeping well during a ~~pandemonium~~ pandemic that go beyond wearing a mask. Let's look at navigating your relationship with your parents under stress, cranking up the self care, how to get any kind of physical activity while stuck in ~~prison~~ at home, checking in with yourself and recognising when you need extra support, and most importantly, how to get the extra support.

Get ready. There will be lists.

You have so much to give the world.
Let us help you stay well, so you can.
So head up, lets go...



Checking In

Let's start with a quick check in.

Wherever you are in the moment you're reading this, take a couple of minutes to reconnect with yourself.

Start with some deep breaths in through your nose and feel the air in your lungs, expanding your ribs and pushing your belly out a little.

Exhale slowly through your mouth and feel the air rush past your lips. Let your shoulders drop.

Are any emotions surfacing?

If so, notice them and let them pass by. Keep breathing.

Draw your attention to the ground underneath your feet.

Notice how it feels.

Now bring your attention to the space you're in.

Try noticing:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

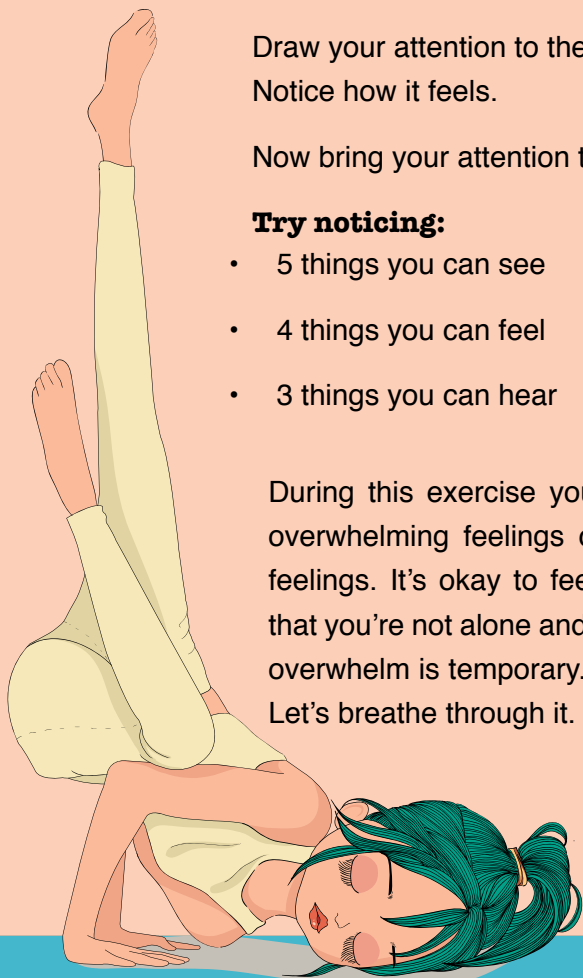
Bring your attention back to your breath.

During this exercise you might have noticed that some pretty overwhelming feelings came up. It's okay to feel all of those feelings. It's okay to feel overwhelmed. We want you to know that you're not alone and that even when it doesn't feel like it, the overwhelm is temporary. Feel it and when you're ready, let it go. Let's breathe through it.

YOGA POSES

not required!

Contrary to belief you can do this exercise in your slouchiest joggers sat in the car!



Getting to Know You

It's really important to get a good idea of who you are. And by that we mean, **you** need to get a good idea of who you are.

What makes you happy? What makes you mad? What calms you down?
How do you know when things are getting out of control for you? When you know these things about yourself, you can help others to understand you too.

There are a few things we zero in on when we're helping young people problem solve in the mental health space:

Triggers:

These are the things that set you off. The things that make you unbelievably angry, scared or sad. We all have triggers – the trick is to recognise them. During this lockdown period you've probably found more of these.

Early warning signs:

These are the ways you know you're slipping, going downhill, heading for rock bottom. You might get more tearful, lose your appetite, lose sleep or sleep too much. You might notice you're snapping at people or losing interest in things you usually like. Maybe you notice physical feelings inside yourself, like shortness of breath, racing heart, or an upset stomach. Listen to your body when it's telling you something's wrong.

Protective factors:

If early warning signs are the things that tell you you're starting to tumble downhill, protective factors are the rocks you grab hold of to stop the fall. Often protective factors include family members, pets, friends, projects, passions and things we're looking forward to. We acknowledge that this is really hard right now. Family relationships are under pressure, you can't see your friends and it's hard to look forward to things when it feels like this pandemonium pandemic is never ending. When there aren't as many rocks to hold onto, we have to find a way to dig our heels in.

The FIRST list!

Oh! Did we mention this is a book you're allowed to write in? Let's make a list!

Things that are pretty good right now:

Things that really suck right now:

Things that are helping me feel better:

Things that are making it worse:

Ways that I can help myself feel better:

How I know when things are getting really bad:

Who can I talk to?

Note: As you go through this book, you might get some more ideas or think of other things that you want to add to your list. Add as much as you like and revisit it often! Draw on it, colour it in, rip it out and stick it to your wall, take a photo of it on your phone... Whatever! It's yours.

If you're having trouble thinking of ways to manage stressful moments, we've added a 'sensory checklist' below which you can go through and **circle things you enjoy or find soothing**. We've also included a list of ways you could use some of the methods you've checked off the list.

Visual: Watch one of your favourite films or TV shows. Look at pictures you find soothing – you might like to make a Pinterest board or scrapbook of images you like. It could be anything from funny memes, to a collection of seaside photos, or maybe some kind of aesthetic like cosy photos of rainy days.

Auditory: Put on your favourite music, but make sure it's helpful – check the section on music and mood first! Open your window and listen to the noises outside, trees rustling, cars on the road... Listen to a podcast or a meditation app (we list some good apps at the back of this book). If you're lying awake in the night trying not to spiral, try listening to white noise, like switching on a fan. If you don't have one, you could download a white noise app too.

Touch: Put on your cosiest clothes and wrap yourself up in a soft blanket. If you find temperature changes helpful, try an icepack or heatpack, a shower, a cold facecloth, ice cubes. You might like fiddling with things – maybe a fidget spinner or tangle toys would be good for you.

Smell: Put on your favourite body spray or light a scented candle. Make your favourite warm drink and take a second to savour the smell before you drink it. Put an essential oil you like into a diffuser or dab some onto your wrists. Bake some cookies and let the delicious smell drift through the whole house.

Taste: Well if you're going to bake cookies you may as well eat some, right? And share them with the family! It feels good to share. Make a favourite snack or meal. Suck on a peppermint or a chocolate – a flavour you enjoy. Pay attention to the flavour on your tongue.

Sensory Checklist

Tick all the things you like

MOVE

- ☐ Walking
- ☐ Running
- ☐ Stretching
- ☐ Playing with a pet
- ☐ Bike riding
- ☐ Dancing

TOUCH

- ☐ Having a bath
- ☐ Making art
- ☐ Ice/heat pack
- ☐ Squeezing
- ☐ Building
- ☐ Gardening
- ☐ Games
- ☐ Massage
- ☐ Washing my face
- ☐ Hugs

LISTEN

- ☐ Music
- ☐ Singing
- ☐ Talking
- ☐ Relaxation
- ☐ Quiet

LOOK

- ☐ Watching TV/Movies
- ☐ Puzzles
- ☐ Dim lights
- ☐ Reading

TASTE

- ☐ Chewing gum
- ☐ Sucking on a mint
- ☐ Drinking a warm drink
- ☐ Drinking a cold drink
- ☐ Eating foods with different textures
- ☐ Chewing or sucking ice cubes

OMG Parents!

Right?!

Parents are cool and everything - without them we wouldn't be here to argue with them. But it's hard to tolerate each other when you're stuck in the same space day in, day out, because you're a teen and they're ...your parents.

(If you don't argue with your parents please tell us what your secret is.)

The ugly truth is, your parents didn't get a manual telling them how to manage life during a pandemonium pandemic either. So they're kind of rolling with what they know. That means some of them might be expecting you to do more around the house since you're home, others might be trying to enforce routines even though it feels like the whole year's been thrown out the window so what's the point. Others might be hands off, letting you do your own thing so much that you don't actually know what way is up, or maybe they're super hands on, invading your privacy *way too much*.



Do parents appear very nonhuman at times?

Maybe it feels like they're picking fights with you.

Maybe they're fighting more with each other.

Maybe it feels like they're angry all the time.

Hey. It's normal, right? You're all just feeling your way through these bizarre times and since you're all human (yes, parents too!) it's normal to have strong emotions and be flailing around in the dark at least some of the time. There's no map.

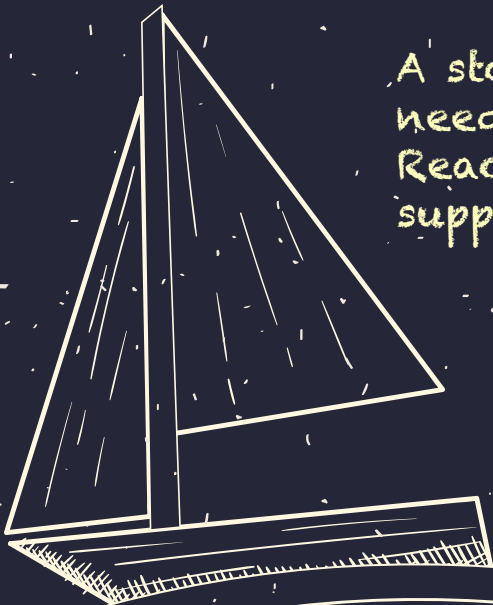
Our parents love us, but as we know, they stuff up sometimes. This is even worse when your parents are under stress themselves. They usually want to help but when they're struggling too it can be hard to find the right words, things get said in anger, and that can cause a clash.

It's pretty essential to be able to get on with your parents, especially if you're stuck in lockdown with them. Maybe you don't live with your parents at all, but being stuck inside with anyone for an extended period of time will take its toll.

Let's work on finding an even playing ground.

- **Talk about boundaries.** Let them know that just because you're at home all the time doesn't mean they can start charging into your room without knocking whenever they feel like it
- **Come to some kind of agreement**
Spoken or written up and stuck to the fridge, outlining how you'll help around the house. Maybe you'll do the dishes after dinner. Maybe you'll do the vacuuming once a week after you've finished your classes.
- **Hold a family meeting** if you need to, if there are frequent disagreements or miscommunications, or if there are a lot of people in your home. Make sure you're all on the same page.
- **Count to ten before snapping** (biggest challenge ever). Be mindful of your own reactions.
- **Try to consider the other's perspective.** They should be considering yours too.





A stormy sea
needs a crew.
Reach out for
support.

Don't Skip This Bit:

We want you to know that although your parents are human and under stress, they are still the adults in this situation and it's your right to be able to depend on them. You should be able to approach them if you are struggling. You should know they have your back.

We know that all humans take their stress out in different ways. Physical harm is unacceptable. If you are afraid of your parents or the people/person you live with, if they are hurting you or threatening your safety, please go straight to the Where To get Help on page [29](#) and text, call, or email one of the services who can give you support.



Cello from the Other Side

*I followed the sunrise to Melbourne one day,
paused outside the Conservatorium
in the dappled morning light, letting
the song of a cello spill over me
from an open window
on a busy street.*

*My heart sang along,
soft and slow.*

It still sings along with that memory.

The open window.

The busy street.

Everything is different now.

Only music remains the same.



The Good, Bad and the Very Addictive of Music

Most of us listen to music. Some of us listen to music along with doing something like exercise, cleaning, going places. Music can change a mood, set a new mood or feel better. In fact, research tells us that the right song can activate our body's natural feel good chemicals like endorphins and oxytocin. But sometimes it is possible that listening to a certain song may make us feel worse. So it is important to be aware of the effect those songs have on you:

- When does it stop being helpful? Sometimes listening to songs that help you vent can be cathartic, but after that it might make you feel more angry and stressed.
- Does the song bring back negative memories or experiences, unpleasant feelings and make you spiral instead?

Knowing how our music choices affect us will help the way we listen to music to help bring our mood to a more positive space and feel more in control of our thoughts and feelings. Remember what works for you might not work for another person. Check out what other young people and musicians say about their favourite music here: tuneinnotout.com/mental-health/music-and-our-mental-health/

OK it might not feel this way atm but there are some advantages to being stuck at home for an extended time, like there's now time to learn to play a musical instrument. There are some inspiring video clips on YouTube to get you started for example www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaugRxMz7tw. By the way, the ukulele is great for beginners to master a few chords quickly and easily. You can get creative with your friends online to check out ukulele lessons on YouTube! For those of you who want to make music and are technologically inclined, there are apps you can download like Loop, iKaossilator, Drum Pad Machine (DPM). Don't say I didn't tell you but these can be very addictive but so much fun too especially when there's not much to do.

For more information about how you can hang out with your family using music please go to: www.childrens.health.qld.gov.au/chq/our-services/mental-health-services/music-and-mental-health/

Get Moving

Physical activity can help support your mental health and wellness during the ~~pandemonium~~-pandemic. Moving for wellness is different compared to training for a specific sport or competition. You don't need to be an athlete, good at sport, or a certain shape or size to receive the health benefits of physical activity. The best thing? Only a small amount of physical activity is required to reap **mental health and wellness benefits**.

For the mind

Physical activity can reduce symptoms of depression. During physical activity the brain releases feel-good chemicals making you feel happier and this feel-good factor can last for hours after your session!

Physical activity can prevent feelings of anxiety. When you are feeling anxious, physical activity can be used as a healthy coping strategy to provide a distraction from your worries.

High levels of stress – like during a ~~pandemonium~~-pandemic – make people less likely to be physically active. However, regular physical activity actually helps us cope better with stress.

Just 10 minutes of walking outside in nature can do wonders for your emotional health and wellbeing.



For brain power

Studying at the best of times can be challenging let alone studying during a ~~pandemonium~~-pandemic. Want to study more efficiently and effectively? Physical activity improves attention, focus and concentration which can lead to better academic performance. Scientists have discovered that young people who engage in regular physically activity have larger brain volumes in areas involved with memory and executive functions compared to young people who are physically inactive! Make sure to schedule your physical activity in before a study session.



For sleep

Sleep is very important for maintaining our mental health and wellness.

Do you know how much sleep you should be getting per night?

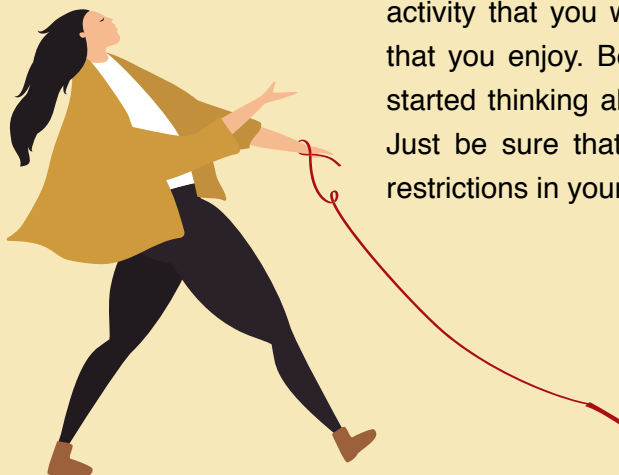
Answer: Young people aged 14 to 17 need an uninterrupted 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night.



During the ~~pandemonium~~-pandemic you're likely to move less and this can affect your sleep. Adding physical activity sessions throughout your day is a healthy strategy for getting good quality sleep and helping to maintain consistent bed and wake-up times.

What type?

The best physical activity for your wellbeing is any activity that you will do and most importantly one that you enjoy. Below are some ideas to get you started thinking about what you do and don't like. Just be sure that your activities comply with the restrictions in your area.



Walk the dog, even if you don't have one (you don't have to take the lead though).

For the sporty ones: throw and catch a ball, kick the footy, hit a tennis ball against the wall, shoot some hoops, ride your bike. What other sporting equipment do you have around the house or hidden in the garage?

For the creatives: take your camera out with you on a walk, build or make something (model making, woodwork, refurbish a piece of furniture), put some music on and dance like no one is watching, learn to juggle, hula hoop.

For the gamers: check out apps like *Zombies*, *Run*, *Just Dance!*, *Geocaching*, *Pokemon Go*, and *Heads Up: Act it Out*.

For the traditionalists: Check out the [Exercise Right](#) website for aerobic and strength training workouts you can do safely at home with little or no equipment.

Oh and chores count! Clean your room, offer to vacuum and mop the house, make a meal for your family, or do some gardening.



How much?

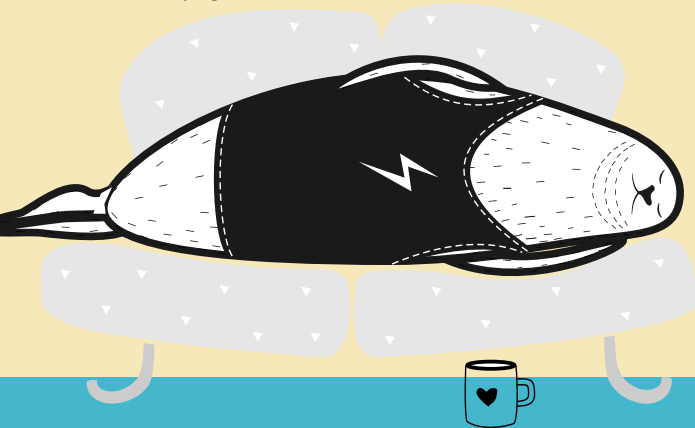
For health benefits, aim for at least 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity per day. While more than 30 minutes is good remember that something is also better than nothing.

Sitting for too long – whether for fun (playing video games/watching Netflix) or because we have to (studying) – can increase feelings of anxiety. So be sure to break up your sitting time throughout the day. Set up a timer so that every 30 minutes you stand up and move around for 5 minutes.

Motivation to move

Some days are harder than others. Remind yourself why moving is important during the ~~pandemonium~~-pandemic – for your mental health and wellness. On these days you can shorten your sessions – perhaps 15 minutes seems more achievable than 30 minutes. Once you start walking you might feel like you can do the full 30 minutes – if not, that's okay – 15 minutes is enough for your mental health. Be kind to yourself – there is always tomorrow.

Some days you might not feel like going outside. Is there something you could do indoors instead? For example, stretching, yoga, or muscle strengthening exercises? Or what about turning on some of your favourite music and dancing? Ask someone in your household to be physically active with you. Many young people find listening to music or a podcast during their walk makes it that little bit easier to get out for their daily walk or jog.



Don't be **seal-y** and sit around for long periods. Sorry that was the **sealist** of puns. But seriously, **Sealf care** is important. Ok we'll stop now

Too much of a good thing

In the same way that not enough physical activity affects our mental health and wellness, so too does too much physical activity. Too much physical activity, or overtraining, can cause depression, anxiety and persistent fatigue. Your body requires adequate rest in between physical activity sessions to rest, adapt and recover. If you are doing more than one hour of physical activity per day ask yourself the follow questions:

- Is the activity I'm doing fun and enjoyable?
- If I'm tired or injured can I take a day off?
- Have I restricted my food intake?

If you think you are doing too much physical activity tell a trusted adult. An adult can help by seeking out an accredited exercise physiologist (an essential service during the ~~pandemonium~~-pandemic) to help with periodising your sessions for health and safety.

A message to athletes

We know it's scary to think that all your hard years and months of training will go to waste while sports are cancelled during the ~~pandemonium~~-pandemic. Although it's true you may lose some fitness while you're not training for your sport – it's okay. Remember that everyone – including your competitors – are in the same boat as you. Because of your training history and higher levels of fitness you will never start back at zero. Our bodies are very adaptable. Focus on what you can do to maintain some of your fitness rather than what you can't do while in lockdown.

For more information, workouts, tips and ideas visit [Exercise Right](#).

MINDFUL WALKING

While you're out walking in your neighbourhood or through a local park find the following things...

- Something that you enjoy looking at
- Something that is your favourite colour
- Something you know someone else will enjoy
- Something that makes you happy
- Something that smells good
- Something that makes you feel safe
- Something that makes a nice sound
- Something that is unique
- Something that makes you laugh
- Something that reminds you of the people you love



Wait, I'm Home Schooled Now?

Whether you were going to school to learn new things or going to fulfil your socialising needs, you are now doing all of your learning (and much less socialising) online. And maybe it's okay or maybe it's awful because teachers and technology don't always mix well. Whatever the case, you're in a very weird situation.

How do you even do this? Who are you supposed to pass notes to?! Where do you find the motivation to get up every day and stare at a computer for the purposes of learning? **Some ideas:**

- Remember your goal. Maybe you want to get into uni. Maybe you want to get an apprenticeship. Maybe you just want to finish school, take a gap year and travel the world post pandemonium pandemic. Whatever your goal is, don't lose sight of it. This is what you're here for. This is where you're headed.
- Make some kind of routine. One that works for you and your learning. Work with your teachers to figure it out.
- Reward yourself. When you finish your work for the day or submit an assignment or complete a hard exam, make sure you've got something good lined up and waiting for you at the end.
- Be kind to yourself. Know that this is so incredibly hard for everyone involved and if your grades are slipping, you're not alone. Talk to your teacher. They're there to help and are well aware of the stress you're under.



Feel Like A Project?

We all need downtime, but sometimes downtime turns into straight up boredom. And when we're bored our minds can start to fill the space with a lot of thoughts. And sometimes, because we're human, overthinking turns into a snowball which turns into an avalanche. So it can be good to make sure our minds aren't left too idle for too long.

In the middle of a ~~pandemonium~~-pandemic it can be harder to find things to do. We have ideas!

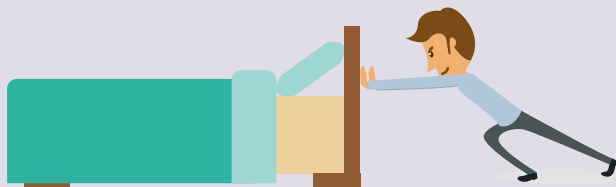
Have lunch or dinner with your friends online: Arrange a catch up with your friends on the House Party app. Everyone brings their own meal to sit down and eat together in a socially distant manner! You could even dress nicely for the occasion, just to get out of your lockdown PJs. If it's a nice day it could be cool to have a picnic in your backyard or on your balcony. It's so important to stay connected in times like this. Reach out.

War time cake: Baking is fun and rewarding unless you mix up the salt and the sugar (been there). During the war, when families were surviving on rations they still managed to whip up delicious cakes with way less ingredients than are used now (looking at you, scraped vanilla seed pods, almond flour, unicorn glitter...). If you fancy yourself as a bit of a baker or if you've always wanted to try your hand at it, you can find a lot of recipes online.



Redecorate your room: Please note we're talking about rearranging furniture, not trying to knock down loadbearing walls. Sometimes if you're feeling stuck, rearranging your space can feel fresh and new. Like photography? Print some of your favourites off and make a gallery wall, or find some art you like online.

No frames? Stick them to the wall with washi tape.



Arrange your books a different way, or the knick knacks on your dresser. Got any leftover paint? Give your side tables a new look. Enlist the help of your parents or cooperative siblings and move your whole bed. It'll be a less disastrous lockdown story than cutting your own fringe...

Make a scene map: This is super useful if you've got goals and aren't sure if or how you'll be able to reach them. Seniors in high school might find this one especially useful.

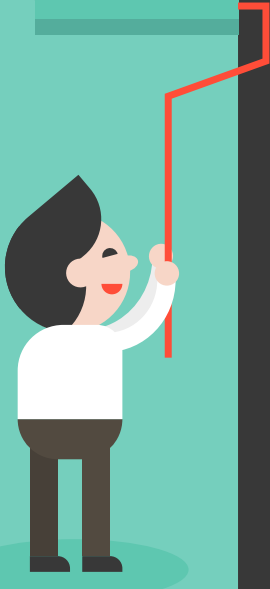
- Get an A4 piece of paper and some coloured pens
- Imagine yourself achieving your goal. It can be as big or small as you like. Imagine it clearly and pay attention to details. See yourself living it.
- Now draw it! It doesn't have to be incredible – it's not being displayed in a gallery. But it does need to clearly show you living your dream. Be specific. Don't forget the details.
- Stick it on your wall. When you're feeling frustrated with your path – look at it and remember you can make it happen.

Start a journal: Getting your thoughts and feelings out on paper can be really good for you. Write down your experiences during lockdown and maybe one day you'll look back on it and remember. You're a part of history and you have so much to say.

Alternatively you could start a gratitude journal and leave it next to your bed. Every night write down three things you were grateful for that day, however big or small. We're reprogramming neural pathways here. Once you've trained your brain to search for the good in every day, you eventually stop having to look.

If you want to start a journal to get out all of your negative thoughts, that's also a good idea. We recommend not keeping this one next to your bed. Maybe do something symbolic, like tearing the page out once you've finished writing, rip it up and bin it. Good riddance!

IMPOSSIBLE



Learn something new: Is there something you've always wanted to learn? Now is the time! Maybe you've always wanted to be able to *parle Francais*, sketch, paint sunsets, fix the car, sew a dress. Friends, we are coexisting with the internet, and the learning opportunities are limitless. What's stopping you?

Start a photo a day project: Get out your phone, your Instax, your DSLR, whatever, and snap a photo a day of your lockdown experience.

Can you turn the seemingly impossible into the possible?



Fill Me Up With Stars

The dark pressed in on me tonight.

Squeezed out all my air,
made a speedball of my heart,
wrapped itself around my spine,
tried to paralyse me.


But I made it outside,
burst through the back door
and suddenly I was covered
in darkness, all alone.

Then I looked up at the sky
and the Southern Cross looked back
and the breeze kissed my cheeks
and I realised
maybe I can sit in some darkness.

And maybe I can still be safe here.

I breathed in and filled myself up
with stars.

Exhaled,
and blew them back to the sky.



Checking In...

Hey. How are you travelling?

We're near the end of the book. Take a couple of minutes and go back to those deep breaths we did earlier.

*As you exhale notice any feelings that show up.
Let them wash over you and dissolve.*

Keep reconnecting with your breath.

*Move through your body, feeling the tension
ease from your head, right down to your toes.*

*Whether you're sitting in a chair or on the floor,
or lying down, notice how the ground is still
steady underneath you.*

How are you feeling?

If you're doing okay today, that's great! If you're feeling down, lonely, frustrated, trapped... Remember you're not alone, that even the longest days are made up of moments and even the most overwhelming moments will pass. Trust us on this.

If you're feeling unsafe and are able to, please tell your parents. Then go to page 29 of this book and call one of the services listed to talk it out with a trained mental health counsellor. Have a look at the list you made earlier and pick something you identified under things that are helpful. **If you are at immediate risk call 000.**

There are so many people who care about you. Let them help



Where To Get Help

Call:

Lifeline: 13 11 14

lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636

beyondblue.org.au

Suicide call back service: 1300 659 467

suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Emergency services: 000

Mental Health Apps:

[Happy Not Perfect](#)

[Headspace](#)

[Calm](#)

[Beyond Now](#)

Other helpful services:

Tune In Not Out - youth website

www.tuneinnotout.com

headspace: 1800 650 890

You can also visit headspace.org.au for your nearest centre and to find brilliant resources on everything covered in this booklet and more

Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800

kidshelpline.com.au

ReachOut:

au.reachout.com

SANE Australia: 1800 187 263

sane.org

All the Best

You've made it to the end of the book! Thank you for sticking it out. We hope that you've either learned some new things or been reminded of what you already knew.

On the last page of this book is a letter to your parents/caregivers. You can tear it out or screenshot it and give it to them.

We've been reminding you all through the book that this situation is temporary, even though it feels like a lifetime. Eventually, restrictions will start lifting and life will gradually get back to normal. It might be surprising, but sometimes when we ease off the reins, things can start to feel chaotic inside us. When we get used to the containment of being at home and under strict rule for weeks on end, there can be a real sense of spinning out of control when things go back to the way they were. It's understandable that your anxiety might also increase when this happens.

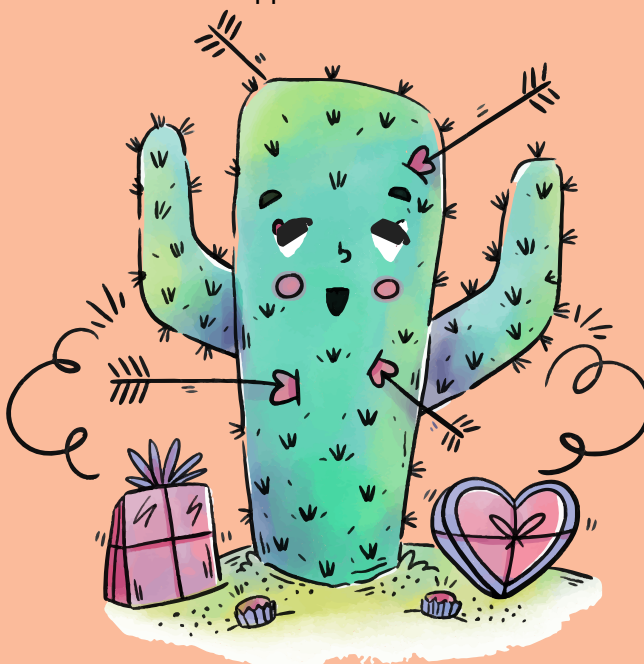
You're normal.

Be kind to yourself.

Ease into it.

Reach out.

You've got this.



Things won't be cactus forever.
This too will pass.

A Guide for Parents:

So you're raising a teenager in the middle of a global crisis. Bet you weren't prepared for that one.

It's clear that the restrictions, regulations, general chaos and fear are affecting young people adversely. While they may be resilient, they don't have the same coping faculties that adults have developed and they don't always have the words to put to their experiences.

We know that the emotional part of the brain has fully formed in early adolescence, but the decision-making component doesn't fully develop until the mid twenties. This means that your young person is likely experiencing the full range of emotions, but with less means to process and regulate them.

With this in mind, your teen could be struggling more than you realise or more than they are letting on. The outcomes are a lot better if this is caught early.

Signs your teen is struggling:

- Increased irritability
- Withdrawal from family life
- Loss of appetite
- Change in sleep patterns
- Excessive worry
- Seeking constant reassurance
- Hopeless/helpless themes in conversation
- Not attending to hygiene
- Loss of motivation
- Tearfulness
- Physical health complaints (upset stomach, frequent headaches)



It is so important that you feel confident to have a discussion with your teen. Check in regularly. Ask how they're doing. It is okay to not have the answers. It is also okay for your young person to know that.

If you're worried that your teenager could cause deliberate harm to themselves as a response to the overwhelming stress they're under, be assured that you can ask about thoughts of self harm and suicide without causing a person to act on it. Brave conversations can save lives. In the event that your teen is struggling with those thoughts you can contact headspace, (see page [29](#) for our Where to Get Help section). Get them linked in with mental health services.

If your young person is at immediate risk, call 000 and ensure you have done your best to safeguard your space. Evidence suggests that interrupting the moment by removing access to means can save lives and reduce suicidal intent as the moment passes.

It is also imperative that your young person is not left alone when their risk of immediate self harm or suicide is high. They may resist, but your presence is containing and reassuring. Do not feel pressured to try to fix their problems. You cannot fix a global crisis. But there is power in *'being with'*; that is, the ability to sit with a distressed person in the dark without needing to switch on all the lights. This takes great bravery and you should not have to support your teen alone. Please ensure that not only are they receiving the professional support they need to get through, but that you are too.



& Tune In Not Out for the **Booklet Design**