

# IIMHL & IIDL Leadership Briefing XX

## Public health practices that work for COVID-19

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### Introduction

Three articles are in this Leadership Briefing all of which epitomise the power of a public health response to COVID-19.

The first is by internationally renowned leaders who urge the use of effective public health interventions in this pandemic. They outline what such practices are. The second is an example of a public health approach on the ground in South Australia.

The third is a document based on 'Psychological First Aid' to assist people to help others. The focus is on London but this has applicability for all countries.

We hope these articles are helpful.

### 1. Addressing the public mental health challenge of COVID-19

**The Lancet: Jonathan Campion, Afzal Javed, Norman Sartorius, Michael Marmot, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

Before COVID-19, 20% of the global disease burden was attributable to mental disorder. Factors contributing to the size of this burden include the high prevalence of mental disorders, most lifetime mental disorders arising before adulthood, and their broad effects on health, education, employment, social interaction, violence, and crime.

Evidence suggests that pandemics, including COVID-19, are associated with an increased risk of developing mental disorder and poor mental wellbeing. Groups that are likely to experience disproportionate mental health effects from COVID-19 include those with a mental disorder, health professionals and carers, offenders, refugees, and older people, including those in care homes.

In order to prevent the anticipated effects of COVID 19 on population mental health, there is an urgent need for population-scale implementation of effective public mental health interventions, supported by public mental health practice and innovation (a table is given outlining these). Implementing these interventions will mitigate the impact of the pandemic on mental health, improve population wellbeing, prevent mental disorders from arising, and reduce relapse of mental disorders, with associated economic returns, even in the short term. Public mental health practice

should be an integral part of the response to COVID-19, and will have immediate positive effects and a legacy likely to long outlast the pandemic.

<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S2215-0366%2820%2930240-6>

## 2. Australia: Government of South: Health response - COVID-19

A range of measures are being implemented on the advice of our medical and public health experts, to protect the health and wellbeing of all South Australians and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community. The South Australian response is tailored to our local conditions and may change over time as the situation in our state changes.

On 15 March 2020, a public health emergency in relation to the transmission of COVID-19 was [declared in South Australia](#) pursuant to section 87 of the [South Australian Public Health Act 2011](#).

SA Health has legislated responsibility within the [South Australian Emergency Management Act 2004](#) and the [State Emergency Management Plan \(SEMP\)](#) for provision, maintenance and coordination of health services.

On this page:

The following links have visual effect only:

- [South Australian roadmap for easing restrictions](#)
- [Emergency Management Directions](#)
- [Command Centre](#)
- [Integrated Inpatient Strategy](#)
- [Pandemic Arrangement](#)
- [Testing](#)
- [Dedicated COVID-19 support](#)
- [Workforce](#)
- [Personal protective equipment](#)
- [Increased hospital capacity](#)
- [Public communication campaigns](#)

Advertising campaigns that aim to educate the general public to help stop the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

- [Stop the Spread](#)
- [Social / Physical Distancing](#)
- [Stop the Flu before it stops you](#)

<https://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/conditions/infectious+diseases/covid+2019/covid-19+response/sa+health+response+-+covid-19>

### **3. Supporting those adversely affected or distressed by the coronavirus outbreak**

**UK: Thrive London June 2020**

This guidance has been developed for people who are supporting communities and individuals who have been adversely affected by COVID-19. It has a focus on safety, dignity and rights.

The purpose of this document is to help you to know the most supportive things to say and do for people who are very distressed. It will also give you information on how to approach conversations safely for yourself and others, and not to cause harm by your actions.

It has been adapted from 'Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers' to suit the needs of Londoners in the context of COVID-19, offering guidance on providing humane, supportive and practical help to those struggling with the social and psychological effects of this crisis.

Further information is available: <https://www.london.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://thriveldn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Supporting-those-adversely-affected-or-distressed-by-the-coronavirus-outbreak-June-2020.pdf>