

# SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH COVID-19



19/03/2020

Dear Skylight Participant,

You will be all very aware of the challenges facing our country from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic announcement in Australia in recent weeks, and I wanted to let you all know how Skylight Mental Health is responding.

Skylight Mental Health is fully committed to helping to slow and manage the impact of COVID-19, particularly for people with a mental illness, but also committed to continuing to support participants in our services in whatever way we can.

Skylight operates a range of group-based activities as well as one-to one services to people across metro and country SA, and we will need to respond differently to both types of services.

For our group-based services, such as our Activities programs, we have been strongly advised that face-to-face group sessions should not proceed at this time. We are looking at alternate ways of engaging with people who usually participate in these programs but, **at this stage, groups sessions are cancelled and not likely to re-commence for some months**. If you participate in groups, it is likely that you have already been contacted and we will look at ways how we can continue to support you.

In terms of our **one-to-one programs, these will continue with some modifications** depending on the type of one-to-one service, your circumstances and availability of staff. If you have not already been contacted, this is work we will continue, and you will hear from us over the next week or so.

The safety and wellbeing of both our participants and staff are our top priorities. We will do our best to ensure that we all stay as safe as possible while balancing the need to provide services, and to rebuild services once the COVID-19 crisis has diminished. Consequently, we have implemented some expectations that apply to both staff and participants. These are:

- Report all risks and concerns about our health or the health of others promptly.
- Not to attend a worksite or interact with staff or participants if:
  - We have cold or flu like symptoms,
  - We have been in contact with someone with a confirmed, or suspected, case of COVID-19,
  - We have been in contact with someone who has travelled from overseas in the last 14 days.
- Take all precautions to ensure our own safety and wellbeing, including using the alcohol hand gel and disinfectant wipes provided at Skylight premises, and:
  - Clean our hands frequently, with soap and water for 20 seconds, or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser.
  - Avoid contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.
  - Practice cough etiquette (keep away from other people, cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues or clothing, and clean your hands).
- Implement good 'social distancing' practice and maintaining a 1.5 metre distance between all people.
- Using electronic communications or cancelling face-to-face meetings where possible, except for necessary one-to-one support.

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- Ensure everyone understands and follows these expectations.

In addition, Skylight has enacted its Pandemic Plan, which is designed to manage how we respond to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and established a Management Team to update and review our plans and decisions continuously.

As a participant in Skylight Mental Health's programs, you still have the same rights as always, including:

- To have individual human worth, dignity and privacy respected.
- To have programs planned and delivered based on participants needs and input.
- Access to, and availability of, appropriate services.
- To expect reasonable safety in so far as practices and environment are concerned.
- To be involved and contribute to decision-making regarding individual rehabilitation and recovery goals.
- To engage in treatment that will preserve and enhance personal autonomy.
- Express grievances and seek redress without fear of it affecting decisions relating to their participation.
- To expect from Skylight and its employees the highest quality of service in line with their training to meet service delivery outcomes.
- To have services provided by appropriately qualified/experienced/competent staff/volunteers.

In addition, you as a participant have a responsibility to, most importantly at this stage, report to Skylight if you are unwell or experiencing any cold or flu like symptoms and to ensure you are taking all precautions to maintain your health.

Please note that with the increasing risk of community transmissions of COVID-19, and despite our best attempts, it is possible that one or more of our staff may contract the illness and we cannot guarantee that participants will not be affected. Therefore, you have the right to refuse face-to-face contact with Skylight staff and to discuss other service options if you are concerned about that risk.

Please feel free to contact Skylight if you have any queries.

To stay updated with Skylight decisions, please follow Skylight Mental Health via our Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/SkylightMH/>

Regards,



**Paul Creedon**

**CEO**

**Skylight Mental Health**