

Media Release

The Hon Martin Foley MP
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services
Minister for Equality



Tuesday, 29 December 2020

SUPPORT FOR VICTORIANS WITH ANXIETY

The Andrews Labor Government is ensuring Victorians struggling with anxiety and distress get the support they need.

Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria will receive an extra \$200,000 to provide surge capacity for their specialist OCD and anxiety helpline, which has experienced a 232 percent rise in demand this year.

This comes following a \$250,000 investment to ARCVic earlier this year, to improve access to support and ongoing care for people with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and other anxiety conditions.

Since the start of the pandemic, the service has recruited 70 more volunteers and extended its operating hours, so more Victorians can access the support they need, when they need it. This funding will deliver the new CARES 4ME program to be run by ARCVic, that caters to those who require ongoing support.

CARES 4ME program matches clients to trained volunteers with lived experience of anxiety. Volunteers provide emotional support and practical guidance to help people work through their individual needs and to develop anxiety management strategies.

This initiative continues to fill the gaps in the system during the pandemic and ensuring Victorians get the specialised support they need, by providing regular check-ins.

The *Victorian Budget 2020/21* is investing \$868.6 million in the recent budget, to ensure Victorians get the mental health support they need when they need it. This investment will fund the rollout of the interim recommendations from the Royal Commission into Mental Health.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Labor Government has invested more than \$220 million into mental health services, to help Victorians reaching out for help with stress, isolation and uncertainty during and after the coronavirus pandemic.

For OCD and anxiety support call ARCVic on 1300 269 438. Other mental health resources and support service are available at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19>.

Quotes attributable to Acting Minister for Mental Health Martin Foley

“Victorians experiencing anxiety will get the mental health supports that address their specific needs.”

“This vital funding will ensure that we meet the demand of Victorians reaching out for help with OCD and other anxiety conditions, during and after the pandemic.”

Quotes attributable to ARCVic CEO, Michelle Graeber

“ARCVic is here to let you know you don’t need to be alone. We are only a phone call away; we understand anxiety and can provide people with the strategies and knowledge that will help them on the journey to recovery.”

“We are all dealing with unprecedented uncertainty and major changes to the way we live our lives as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Having to adapt in ways that are completely new and with mounting uncertainty can bring unwanted anxiety, stress and worry.”

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