

24 March 2020

Dear Consumer/Participant

As you know, there is ongoing and growing concern about the spread of COVID-19, also known as Coronavirus.

This is impacting on us here at Multicultural Care, and as an Aged Care and Disability Service, we have very specific vulnerabilities. These include:

- We support many people with suppressed or vulnerable immune systems
- Many of our services happen in group settings
- Our clients' support needs make social distancing difficult to implement
- Our clients may have multiple visitors in their home
- Our clients may not understand the risks and additional hygiene measures required
- Our clients may be dependent on others for basic activities of daily living

While none of this means we need to panic, it does mean we need to respond responsibly in line with government and medical advice and begin planning for a potential worsening of the situation. We want to ensure you that the health and safety of our consumers/participants and our staff are at the forefront of all our decisions at this moment. In this crisis, we are all being affected or will be affected at some stage. These are unprecedented times and we must stay calm and do our best.

Our Preparedness relevant to COVID – 19

We want to share with you what we are doing at Multicultural Care to protect our staff, our consumer/participants and our community.

COVID-19 – Current Situation

- We have no reported or confirmed cases of COVID-19 relating to our office or BSS staff.
- Having said that, one of our BSS has come in close contact with her partner who is confirmed as having COVID-19. This BSS is currently self-isolating at home to avoid any spread of the infection. We have taken advice and are monitoring the situation closely.

Our Safety and Well-being Actions

- We have developed a Pandemic/ Epidemic policy and procedure. Our COVID-19 Response team meets daily to monitor the evolving situation.
- We have implemented many initiatives, including actions identified by NSW Health, Department of Health and relevant peak bodies ACSA and NDS.

Business Continuity

- We are currently reviewing our Business Continuity Plan.
- We are taking every possible precaution to ensure that we can continue to provide our services to our consumers/participants safely.

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- Consumers/participants will continue to have access to our services as usual and to care advisors/coordinators in person (while circumstances permit) or via email and telephone.
- We are setting up a COVID-19 response plan to ensure a continuum of care for our consumers/participants during this time.

Safety Precautions taken to date

- We have implemented many safety precautions in our organisation, including directing our people to stay home if they have symptoms of illness and self-quarantine after suspected or confirmed exposure.
- We have postponed our Harmony Week Festival and have restricted travel and directed our people not to attend non-essential external meetings.
- We have cancelled our centre-based respite (Day Care) services.
- We continue to reinforce our office protocols regarding hygiene and introduced hand sanitiser to maintain the healthiest work environment possible.
- We have provided education on infection control and hand hygiene to all BSS.
- We continue to provide PPE to BSS.
- A COVID-19 Team has been set up to take all enquiries from consumer/participants and their families. Members: Manager of Client Services, Stephen Lowe; Team Leader-Individual Services, Tanish Khanna; and Team Leader-Grant Funded Services, Steven Walker.
- We will continue to update our staff about the latest information as the situation evolves. These communications have been, and continue to be, conveyed via e-mail.

New processes to be implemented

- A link will be set up on our Website whereby consumers /participants and their families can stay updated.
- We will be implementing a Consumer/ Participant Screening process. This will entail Bilingual Support Staff (BSS) phoning consumers/participants before visiting and/or upon arrival at their home and asking them a couple of questions to determine if the service should proceed. This is to ensure the health and safety of both our staff and our consumers/participants.

If you are concerned that you or your loved one may be infected:

- The national 24/7 hotline triages people with respiratory symptoms and those who are concerned about contact with a possible Coronavirus case. If you think you may be infected you can call the triage hotline on 1800 020 080.
- Suspected Coronavirus patients can present in person to a GP clinic, a dedicated respiratory clinic or to a hospital ED if they call ahead.

We urge you to stay vigilant. Please inform us if you are showing signs of a runny nose, sore throat, cough, fever or difficulty breathing or have recently returned from overseas. Please wash your hands thoroughly all the time.

As always, you should feel free to call your key contact person or COVID – 19 team if you have any concerns about your service. We will be continuing to monitor the information provided by the government to ensure the best response in keeping people safe and infection free.

Regards



Dr Rosy Walia