



# BeWell news



## Stay safe and be prepared this summer

The long range forecast for the next two months indicates we will get more rain, an increased chance of flooding and likely some hot weather in January and February. With so much water around, we will experience an increase in humidity.

**Mozzies are buzzing.** Rain and floods are perfect for disease-carrying mosquitoes. Cover up with loose-fitting clothing, use mosquito repellent on exposed skin and remove any stagnant water around your home where mosquitoes can breed.

**Plan ahead whatever the weather may be.**

**If hot,** schedule activities in the coolest part of the day and avoid exercising in the heat. If you must go out, wear a hat and sunscreen, and take a bottle of water with you. **If raining,** ensure you wear protection,

have an umbrella and sturdy shoes. It might be handy to have some essential supplies on-hand, so you do not need to go out.

Our library buildings across the City of Monash can provide cool and dry spaces if you need them. Visit [www.monlib.vic.gov.au](http://www.monlib.vic.gov.au) for locations.

During challenging times, it is good to be able to discuss your concerns with someone. Be listened to and take the time to think about actions. There are several services around to support you. **See attached fliers on R U OK? and private counselling.**

During the festive season, a lot of people feel sadness and not joy. You can reach out to friends, neighbours and extended family to ensure they are coping with the holiday season. **Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.**

### IN THIS EDITION

- Restoring Dignity to Aged Care
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**Feedback on 9518 3553**  
[communitysupport@monash.vic.gov.au](mailto:communitysupport@monash.vic.gov.au)

**Next edition: April 2023**

#### Public Holidays 2022

- Christmas Day: Sunday 25 December
- Boxing Day: Monday 26 December
- Christmas Day (in lieu): Tuesday 27 December

#### Public Holidays 2023

- New Year's Day: Sunday 1 January
- New Year's day (in lieu): Monday 2 January
- Australia Day: Thursday 26 January
- Labour Day: Monday 13 March
- Good Friday: Friday 7 April

- Easter Saturday: Saturday 8 April
- Easter Sunday: Sunday 9 April
- Easter Monday: Monday 10 April

**Council's Domestic Assistance and Respite Services are not available on public holidays.**



## RESTORING DIGNITY TO AGED CARE

**The Australian Government's aged care reforms will put older Australians first, improving quality, safety and choice in aged care to create a sector that:**

- is responsive to the needs of older Australians
- is simpler to navigate, with face-to-face services
- empowers older Australians to make informed choices
- is well regulated
- is more transparent
- makes sure providers are accountable
- values and grows the aged care workforce.



### GET INVOLVED

There is a range of ways you can be involved in the reforms, including surveys, webinars, online workshops, and consultation papers. You can also engage with the Australian Government face-to-face at some community events. Find more information about current and upcoming engagement opportunities below.

**You can also register your interest to be involved in consultations about the aged care reforms:**

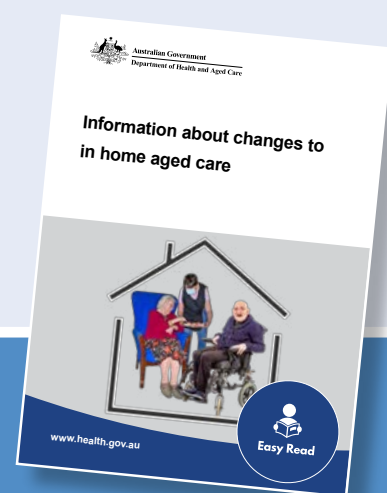
[https://healthau.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_2tWXoF3uTem0tdc](https://healthau.au1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_2tWXoF3uTem0tdc)

**There is a discussion on reforming aged care.**

**To find out what is happening:**

[www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aged-care-reforms](http://www.health.gov.au/initiatives-and-programs/aged-care-reforms)

You can subscribe to a newsletter to keep up to date.



**Easy-to-read 19-page document:**

[www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/information-about-changes-to-in-home-aged-care-easy-read](http://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/information-about-changes-to-in-home-aged-care-easy-read)

## SENIORS FESTIVAL UPDATE - DRAG BINGO



**On Tuesday 11 October, more than 200 people attended the Monash Mount Waverley Showcase held for our Seniors Festival at the Mount Waverley Community Centre and Youth Hall.**

The showcase saw the Chinese Association hold an open day for our community to see fan dancing, try tai chi or table tennis and listen to the brass band. More than 15 community groups attended, providing information on how to join their groups.

The Macedonian Seniors Group had more than 100 community members attend Bingo with a Twist! Hosted by Drags Aloud, with glamorous frocks, wicked jokes and memorable witty calls participants enjoyed a colourful afternoon of bingo. This event supported our LGBTQIA+ community members.

# SERIOUS INCIDENT RESPONSE SCHEME (SIRS)

## Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) – In-Home Care

**From 1 December 2022, the Serious Incident Response Scheme (SIRS) will be extended from residential aged care to home care and flexible care delivered in a home or community setting.**

From that date, home services providers (including Commonwealth Home Support Programme services and flexible care services through which short-term restorative care is provided in a home care setting) will also need to notify the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission if any of eight types of reportable incidents occur.

Aged care providers have specific responsibilities under the scheme to prevent and manage incidents and notify the commission of reportable incidents. This helps to improve the quality of care and services.



### How does the scheme work? It has two key components:

1. Incident management obligation.
2. Reportable incident obligations either Priority 1 or Priority 2.

#### Priority 1

##### Reportable incidents are reportable incidents:

- that have caused or could reasonably have been expected to cause a consumer injury or discomfort requiring treatment to resolve, **OR**
- involving the unexpected death of a consumer or a consumer's unexplained absence from the service.

**Priority 1 must be notified to the commission within 24 hours.**

#### Priority 2

**Reportable incidents are any reportable incidents that do not meet the criteria for a Priority 1 reportable incident.**

**Priority 2 must be notified to the commission within 30 days.**

## What is a reportable incident?

### A reportable incident is:

- an incident that has occurred, or is alleged or suspected of having occurred, in connection with the provision of care to a consumer
- the incident has caused harm, or could reasonably have been expected to have caused harm, to a consumer.

### Under the scheme, there are eight types of reportable incidents:

- Unreasonable use of force
- Psychological or emotional abuse
- Unexpected death
- Stealing or financial coercion
- Neglect
- Missing consumers
- Inappropriate use of restrictive practices
- Unlawful sexual contact or inappropriate sexual conduct



A provider is legally required, as part of the online notification of a reportable incident, to confirm that the consumer has been provided with a notice of collection (where appropriate) to any persons affected by the incident for whom they have recorded personal or sensitive information (whether in the notification to the commission or in records regarding the reportable incident). The provider of services must notify the Aged Care Quality and Safety Commission of all reportable incidents.

## RESPIRE SERVICES WITH MONASH COUNCIL



### Monash Council offers two different in-home respite services for clients.

**The traditional RESPITE service gives the client's carer (often the spouse, son or daughter) a break from their caring duties.** The Monash care worker arrives at the home and takes a handover from the client's carer. At a prior assessment, a care plan is devised that has all the client's likes and dislikes and normal routines for the care worker to follow while on duty. The Monash care worker and the client then engage in meaningful activities of the client's choice. This service is capped at three hours maximum per week.

This can be taken in one three-hour session or taken in two 90-minute services. This allows enough time for the client's carer to complete errands, have time out for a coffee and chat with friends or head out to appointments or to the shops, or simply have a walk in the park.

**RESPITE INDIVIDUAL** is offered when the client lives alone and has a carer (perhaps their son or daughter) that lives in a different house to the client. The Monash care worker can visit, again following a pre-assessed care plan of client likes and dislikes, and engage in meaningful activities for up to three hours. Activities that the client and care worker could do together include walking in the garden or around the block, completing jigsaws or looking through books together.

If either of these programs interest you, please contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 422 and request a referral for in-home respite services.

## R U OK?

### **R U OK? is a suicide prevention charity inspiring Australians to start life-changing conversations when they're needed most.**

In Australia, suicide is the leading cause of death for males and females aged between 15 and 44. About 3000 people in Australia per year take their own lives. That's almost eight people every day. For every suicide, there are tragic ripple effects for friends, families, colleagues and the broader community. We can all play a role in preventing suicide by looking out for possible warning signs, reaching out and talking about it.

**Place Australia provides affordable psychological and financial counselling. They require a small co-payment which is income tested, so a pensioner would likely pay \$20. They have a physical location in Melbourne and they also do phone counselling. See flyer attached.**



For more information visit [www.ruok.org.au](http://www.ruok.org.au)

# RAPID ANTIGEN TEST (RAT) PROGRAM

## Victorian Government Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) Program

**Monash Council is part of the Victorian Government's Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) Program, with free RATs now available for priority and high-risk community members to collect from:**

- **Civic Centre: 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley (open 8.30am-5pm, Monday to Friday)**
- **Oakleigh Service Centre: 3 Atherton Road, Oakleigh (open 8.30am-5pm, Monday to Friday)**
- **City of Monash libraries located at Clayton, Glen Waverley, Mount Waverley, Mulgrave, Oakleigh and Wheelers Hill.**

Under the Victorian Government's eligibility criteria for the program, you are eligible for RATs if you are aged 70 years or older, a Concession Card holder or person with a disability, immunocompromised or their carer. Please show your concession, Seniors, or disability card to staff to collect your free RATs or let them know you are 70 years or older or immunocompromised.

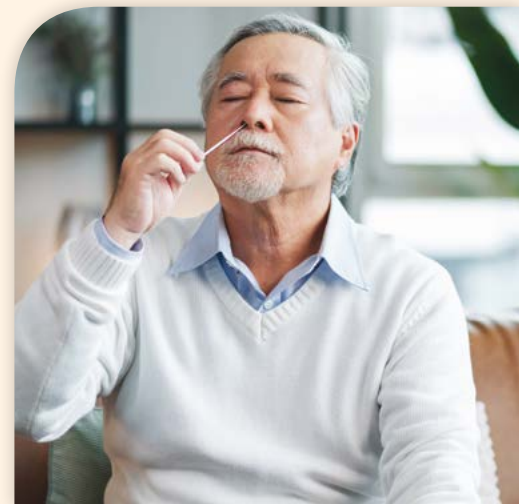
If you have symptoms or have been in contact with someone who has COVID-19, please do not collect RATs until you are well. If you can't get to a location, a guardian or carer can collect your free RATs for you.

## Frequently asked questions about the program:

### Who can get free RATs?

Five tests (one kit) are available each visit for people aged 70 years or older, immunocompromised people and people with concession cards. Eligible concession cards are:

- Seniors card
- Pensioner Concession card
- Commonwealth Senior Health Care card
- Health Care card
- Low Income Health Care card
- Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold, White or Orange cards.



If multiple people are listed on any of these listed cards, they are each entitled to receive free RATs.

### What if I have symptoms or am a contact of a COVID-19 case?

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, do not go to a council location to collect your free RATs. Instead, please collect free RATs at testing sites, which you can find through the Department of Health's coronavirus information website:

[www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/get-a-covid-19-test](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/get-a-covid-19-test)

### Where can I get more information on the use of RATs?

For more information about getting tested and reporting a positive RAT result, visit the Department of Health website:

[www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au)

**Alternatively, you can call the National Coronavirus Helpline on 1800 020 080**

## HOW TO PREVENT FALLS

**Contrary to popular belief, falls are not inevitable and many older people can be prevented from falling. Some risk factors for falls are relatively easy to change and, where falls occur, the severity of injuries can be reduced.**

The first step is to ensure that if a person is feeling unsteady or has a fall, even one that does not cause an injury, an appointment is made to discuss this with a doctor. Falls can be an indicator of an underlying health problem. Falls and balance clinics are available at many public health services to address common causes of falls.

### AVOIDING FALLS

#### To avoid falls and injuries from falls:

- Take steps to improve safety in and around your home.
- Look after your health. Stay up to date with routine health checks, eat a healthy diet, and exercise to improve your balance, strength and flexibility. Try to stay active – home or group exercise programs and tai chi are good options.
- Wear shoes that are comfortable and fit well – they should be wide enough in the toe area, have low or no heels, and have slip-resistant soles.



### IMPROVE SAFETY INSIDE

#### To increase safety in the home and reduce your risk of falling:

- Have good lighting, especially between the bed and the bathroom or toilet at night and near any internal steps. Replace light globes with CFL energy-efficient light globes of 12 watts or higher. Use plug-in night-lights and have movement-sensitive lights near stairs and the bathroom. These lights are available from most hardware stores.
- Use sheer blinds to reduce daytime glare through glass doors and windows.
- Remove clutter and make sure walkways and corridors are kept clear and well-lit.
- Repair or replace carpets with worn areas, holes or long threads.
- Check that mats and rugs are secure and have no tears or wrinkles. Put adhesive strips on all mats and rugs, including those in the bathroom.
- Make sure that chairs and beds are sturdy and easy to get into and out of, and that tables and benches do not have sharp corners.
- Wipe up spills immediately.



## HOW TO PREVENT FALLS (CONT'D)

### IMPROVE SAFETY INSIDE (CONT'D)

- Install grab rails in the bathroom (towel rails are not usually strong enough to use as grab rails). Bathroom tiles can be slippery, especially when wet. Cover these areas with a non-slip material or treatments.
- Avoid having highly polished floorboards.
- Install support rails near steps if there is no hand rail.
- To reduce the risk of falling in an emergency, make sure your house has smoke alarms in working order and a fire blanket or extinguisher that is easy to reach.
- Avoid wearing clothing that is too long or touching the floor, as this can cause you to trip over (for example, your dressing gown).
- Do not wear socks or loose slippers around the home.
- Ask an occupational therapist about ways to make your home safer.



### IMPROVE SAFETY OUTSIDE

#### To increase safety outside the home and reduce your risk of falling:

- Clear away garden tools.
- Avoid using ladders, or ask someone for assistance if you need to access something at height (for example, reaching to a high shelf in the pantry, or changing a light bulb).
- Remove leaves, mosses, fungi and lichen that make garden paths slippery when wet.
- Mark the leading edge of outside steps (for example, with white paint) so they are easy to see.
- Install grab rails next to steps that do not have hand rails.
- Make sure outside steps are well-lit.
- Keep paths well-swept.
- Repair broken, uneven or cracked paths, patios and other walking surfaces.
- Report cracked footpaths to Council.
- Wear sunglasses and a hat to reduce sun glare.



#### LANGUAGE ASSIST

普通话 9321 5485  
Ελληνικά 9321 5482  
廣東話 9321 5481

සිංහල 7005 3002  
Italiano 9321 5483  
हिंदी 7005 3000

Việt Ngữ 9321 5487  
தமிழ் 7005 3003

한국어 9321 5484  
Bahasa Indonesia 7005 3001

## HOW TO PREVENT FALLS (CONT'D)

### STAY HEALTHY

#### To maximise your physical wellbeing and reduce your risk of falls:

- Talk to your doctor about:
  - your diet
  - physical activity
  - managing your medications (including non-prescription ones)
  - ways to manage chronic medical conditions, including dizziness and incontinence.
- Have your eyes tested annually
- Visit your podiatrist regularly to minimise foot problems
- Wear shoes that are comfortable and fit well – they should be wide enough in the toe area, have low or no heels and have slip-resistant soles
- Consider wearing hip or limb protectors to help prevent hip fracture and skin tears in the event of a fall
- Make sure your vitamin D levels are enough for strong bones and muscles
- Eat a healthy diet and drink plenty of fluids
- Get active – research shows that exercise at any age is beneficial.



#### The more active you are, the better your chance of keeping your muscles strong and joints flexible.

To avoid falls and injuries from falls, exercise to maintain or improve your balance, strength and flexibility. Home or group exercise programs and tai chi are good examples. Or you could join a walking group or your local gym – some of which have programs specially tailored for older people. Many local councils support local walking and activity programs.

**Check with your GP before starting a physical activity program. A physiotherapist can help design an exercise program that suits you.**

#### Don't fall for it – falls can be prevented!

**This guide to preventing falls for older people is a handy resource that you can use to reduce your risk of falling.**





## HOW TO PREVENT FALLS (CONT'D)

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU FALL AT HOME

#### If you happen to have a fall at home, don't panic – stay still for a few minutes and try to calm down:

- Call for help if you can.
- Dial triple zero (000) for emergency services or call your local doctor for help – keep your telephone in easy reach of the floor, for instance on a low table.
- Decide whether you can get up yourself.

#### If you can get up by yourself:

- Roll over onto your stomach and try to get into a crawling position.
- Crawl to a stable piece of furniture, like a lounge chair.
- Try to get up onto your knees.
- Push up, using your strongest leg and arms, still firmly holding onto the furniture.
- Sit down on the furniture.
- See your doctor to check for injuries and to assess whether there was a medical cause for the fall.

#### If you can't get up by yourself:

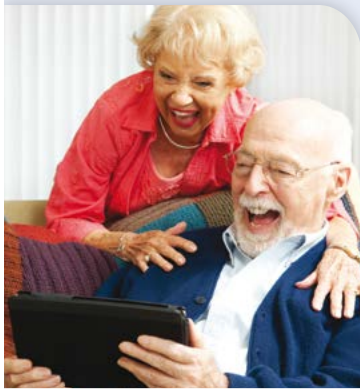
- Try to crawl or drag yourself to somewhere on carpet and find anything that can keep you warm, such as bedclothes, a towel or clothing, while you wait for help.
- Use your personal alarm, if you have one.
- If you don't have a personal alarm, use an object that you can bang to make a loud noise, like a walking stick against the wall, to alert a neighbour.
- If you know no one will hear you, keep warm and try to get up again later.
- See your doctor to check for injuries and to assess whether there was a medical cause for the fall.



### Where to get help

- **In an emergency, always call triple zero (000)**
- **Your GP (doctor)**
- **Local community health services**
- **My Aged Care 1800 200 422**
- **Carers Australia 1800 422 737**
- **COTA (03) 9655 2100**
- **Independent Living Centre Victoria 1300 885 886**
- **Victorian Falls and Balance Service Directory: [www.nari.net.au/victorian-falls-directory](http://www.nari.net.au/victorian-falls-directory) Find a Victorian falls and balance service near you**
- **Source: Better Health Channel: [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/falls-prevention-at-home](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/falls-prevention-at-home)**

## FREE ONLINE HEALTHY AGEING TOOL



**LiveUp is a new, free healthy ageing website and screening tool for older Australians. It can help identify small changes that will make a big difference to everyday life.**

After answering a few short questions on the LiveUp website, users may be directed to:

- low-cost assistance products and equipment to help with everyday living
- local activities and community groups
- the free LifeCurve App that tracks health and offers long-term tailored advice.

**Go to Healthy Ageing | Live up [www.liveup.org.au](http://www.liveup.org.au)**

## SOUND FAIR COACHING

*“I definitely shied away and it even became an issue with relationships because, my husband would want to go do things and instantly I would just knock it on the head and say no, not doing it.” – Maxine.*

Maxine’s experience of living with a hearing condition is not an isolated one. The impacts of hearing conditions are far-reaching but don’t often come up in conversation. When people think about the challenge of hearing loss, often they jump straight to hearing aids as the solution, and a common misconception is that hearing aids can correct hearing loss just like glasses can correct vision loss.

The reality? Living with a hearing condition presents daily challenges, even with great technology. For many people, the ability to live well with hearing loss means being able to ease the full impacts of the condition, whether they be social, emotional, psychological or physical.

**A local not-for-profit organisation, Soundfair**, has been listening to the experiences of people living with hearing conditions and responded by reimagining hearing services that focus not just on ears, but on living well with hearing conditions and easing their impacts on everyday life. If you have a hearing condition and want to learn more, book an appointment to have a chat and a cup of tea or coffee with a Soundfair Connection Coach. Book during December and take a special Soundfair keep-cup with you after your appointment.

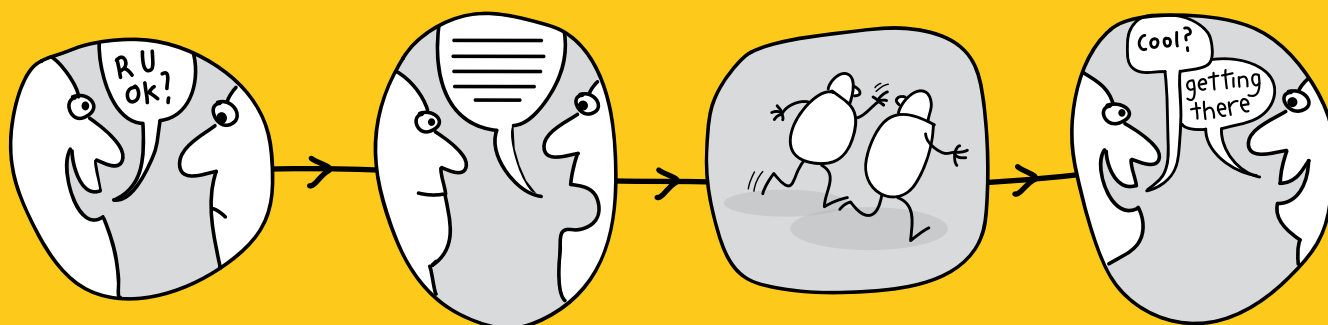


**Visit <https://soundfair.org.au/hearingcentre/connection-coach> to find out more or call Soundfair on 1300 242 842**

## NO GIFT POLICY

**Just a reminder with the approach of the holiday season and clients wanting to give care workers a gift, Monash staff are not permitted to receive any gifts or money from anyone. A simple thank you is welcomed.** We understand you are very grateful for the care worker and the support they offer you and you want to show appreciation to the care worker. Instead of a gift you could write a letter, email or send a feedback card. This appreciation will go on the care worker employee record, and they will be acknowledged by Monash Council. Each year we recognise exceptional customer service for staff and departments.

# Use these four steps and start a conversation that could change a life



1. Ask R U OK?

2. Listen

3. Encourage action

4. Check in

Find tips at [ruok.org.au](http://ruok.org.au)

## Useful contacts for someone who's not OK

If your life is in danger or you're concerned for your own or someone else's safety, please call 000.

You can find support by contacting your local doctor or one of these crisis lines available 24/7.

### Lifeline

13 11 14

[lifeline.org.au](http://lifeline.org.au)

### Beyond Blue

1300 224 636

[beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)

### Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

[suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

### MensLine

1300 789 978

[mensline.org.au](http://mensline.org.au)

More contacts: [ruok.org.au/findhelp](http://ruok.org.au/findhelp)

# RU OK?™

Visit us at [ruok.org.au](http://ruok.org.au)

A conversation could change a life.



## Private Counselling (Medicare)

**Almost half of all Australians will experience mental illness at some point in their lives.<sup>1</sup> Working with a psychologist can help to enable you to deal with these issues effectively and gain a greater understanding of yourself, your behaviours and thinking patterns, and enhance your sense of wellbeing.**

Better Place Australia provides professional psychological support and guidance for many personal or family issues such as:

- Depression
- Anxiety and panic disorders
- Stress management
- Self esteem
- Relationship issues
- Sexual issues
- Grief and loss
- Referrals to specialist support such as alcohol and other drug services, gambling support and family violence services.

### How does counselling work?

Through regular sessions, the clinician explores with you the difficulties and issues you may be facing and assists you to build strategies and coping skills to help you address them. The objective is to help you make a positive change.

### Who can counselling help?

All sorts of people seek counselling for any number of reasons, such as when they:

- Need help dealing with strong emotions such as grief, loss, sadness, anger, blame
- Are struggling to move on from past relationships
- Are in conflict with those close to them, be it partners, parents, family, friends, colleagues or children

- Want help to identify what isn't working in their lives and develop strategies to improve
- Feel like their relationship needs work
- Want an impartial, non-judgmental person to talk to about their problems.

### What won't counsellors do?

- Give advice or be judgmental
- Get emotionally involved
- Diagnose mental illness or prescribe medication (only doctors can do that)
- Take sides or referee a disagreement.

### Is counselling confidential?

Yes. Nothing said will be revealed unless permission has been given and any notes taken are kept secure. There are some circumstances under which confidentiality is limited or revoked due to legal or personal protection requirements.

### Are there costs for Better Place Australia services?

We accept the Medicare benefit as payment for our service with a mental health care plan from your GP. There is a low-cost fee from \$20 to \$80 per session based on a sliding scale of income or if you are experiencing financial hardship.

### Interpreters



You can ask us for an interpreter in your language.

### What do I do now?

If you feel that you would benefit from counselling or you would just like to know more about it, please call **1800 639 523** or send an email to [enquiry@betterplace.com.au](mailto:enquiry@betterplace.com.au) with your contact details. For more information, visit [betterplaceaustralia.com.au](http://betterplaceaustralia.com.au)

<sup>1</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2009). National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing: Summary of Results, 4326.0, 2007. ABS: Canberra

