

# CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### *Important information for Breakaway staff, clients, friends and family*

Most of you will now be aware of what is happening worldwide with the outbreak of Coronavirus, also known as Covid-19. As an organisation we care for our staff and clients and have developed these FAQ document to keep you informed of the latest updates.

#### **What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by a new virus.

#### **What are the symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?**

A person with Coronavirus (COVID-19) will generally develop symptoms 5-6 days post infection however the incubation period can range from 1-14 days.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) can present a range of symptoms including;

- Flu-like symptoms such as coughing, sore throat, headaches, aches and pains
- Possible fever (*some people have tested positive without a noticeable fever*)
- Shortness of breath

As a support worker, early detection of Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an important protective mechanism for our higher risk clients that you may come in contact with.

#### **What to do if a staff member becomes unwell?**

If you are a staff member experiencing or suspect any of the symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19), we request you self-isolate immediately, contact your CLO and seek medical advice.

**Please DO NOT come to work as you may be putting clients and other staff at risk.**

Once you have received a diagnosis from a health professional, please contact your CLO ASAP to let them know what is happening. As an organisation we have a duty of care to our clients and staff and will be required to take further action in the event you are diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19).

#### **What if a client becomes unwell?**

If you are supporting a client who shows signs of Coronavirus (COVID-19), please self-isolate the client at their home and seek medical advice immediately. Please also contact your CLO who will then give you further instructions.

#### **What if staff member or their family member has been in close contact with a confirmed case of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?**

In the event you or your immediate family have been in close contact with a confirmed case of Coronavirus (COVID-19), either in the community or at work, within the past 14 days you will need to self-isolate. Please let your CLO know ASAP.

#### **Travelling overseas**

If you travel overseas, upon your return, you will be required to self-isolate for 14 days before returning to work.

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### How can you help prevent the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent Coronavirus (COVID-19) however, there are other ways you can protect yourself and others from transmission and exposure to illnesses:

- Wash your hands often by using alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Cover your mouth while coughing or sneezing
- Avoid close contact with anyone who has a fever and/or cough
- Avoid contact with wild or farm animals
- Stay home if you are sick
- Self-isolate for 14 days if you feel unwell
- Use appropriate PPE

Please ensure you are taking preventative measures when working with clients by frequent handwashing and using preventative PPE. These are everyday habits that you should practice to help prevent the spread of illnesses.

### How will Breakaway keep everyone safe?

Breakaway has implemented a Pandemic Management Procedure to ensure we comply with the World Health Organisation (WHO) response, local government direction in pandemic situations and any additional guidelines released by the Department of Health and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

This Pandemic Management Procedure outlines the preventative actions the organisation is taking and our response in the event a client or staff member contracts Coronavirus (COVID-19). This Procedure is being communicated to all staff and a copy of it will be available in our respite and other houses for viewing.

### Why are some office staff working from home?

The organisation will also be asking staff to work from different locations to prevent and limit transferring the virus in the office area. If you need to see your Client Liaison Officer in person, we ask that you contact them via phone or email. **DO NOT** come into the office without making an appointment and please **DO NOT** bring clients into the office for any non-essential purpose.

### Why have there been changes to rosters?

There have been significant changes to rostering of support staff working in the houses. Staff will no longer be able to work in more than one house as we need to ensure we do not cross-infect staff and participants in SIL houses with staff working across multiple houses. Each house also now has a Team Leader who will help staff develop daily activities for clients in the houses which will be under lockdown as of Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Clients and staff will only be able to go out for essential shopping, walking around the block for exercise, and visiting essential services such as the doctor, chemist or bank.

***If you become unwell, please notify us immediately and stay at home.***

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#### **Why have I lost hours?**

Due to government guidelines, requiring social distancing, Breakaway has seen a large number of clients put community access services on hold for April 2020 and into the foreseeable future. The reduction of hours has a flow on effect and has required us to reduce non-essential staff positions and staff hours for administration staff and CLOs. It has also led to a reduction of hours for some staff.

#### **What can I do if I have lost income due to loss of shifts?**

The government has recently announced \$130 billion JobKeeper Payment. Unfortunately, Breakaway will not be eligible to participate in this initiative.

Staff concerned about a loss of earnings should contact Centrelink or visit <https://www.servicessaustralia.gov.au/individuals/news/more-financial-support-people-affected-coronavirus> to see if you are eligible for Jobseeker (*formerly NewStart*) Payments.

#### **Do you have other queries?**

Please contact your CLO or send an email to [hotline@breakawaytmba.org](mailto:hotline@breakawaytmba.org)

*Please note: this document will be updated on a regular basis as additional information becomes available.*