

## **UPF Melbourne, Australia Community Leaders Hold Consultations on COVID-19**

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Melbourne, Australia -- On July 26, 2020, community leaders and politicians in Australia began meeting weekly online for consultations on how to support student learning and family wellbeing during this difficult period of COVID-19, hosted by UPF. Four consultations have been held to date, and a total of 35 people have attended them.

### **The Issues**

The second lockdown in the country has hit people harder. Income loss has increased stress on the family, affecting relationships between family members and the education and learning of children. Economic stress also influences the parenting style of parents. The lockdown has also seen a rise in family violence.

In addition, people living alone have been hit very hard by the pandemic because of the loss of human contact that has resulted from it.

### **Strategies to Reduce Stress and Improve Wellbeing**

Organize online community events that include games, performances and entertainment. An artist could be enlisted to share their talent for free.

Community leaders need to keep their communities informed in the languages spoken in their communities through the use of information bulletins offered by the Victorian Multicultural Commission.

### **When in lockdown, follow a clear routine:**

Get up early, shower and get dressed -- do not stay in your pajamas; do not spend too much time in front of the screen; do not listen to the news over and over again; go outside, exercise, clock off at 5 p.m., enjoy a hobby, play a board game, have regular conversations; and divide out the jobs at home, like cooking and cleaning.

### **Outcomes to Support Wellbeing**

During the online consultations, the community leaders are sharing their struggles and ways to cope. Additionally, mental wellbeing experts are sharing information on how to best cope.

### **Education**

Home schooling has been particularly hard for new immigrant families because parents cannot help their children learn as much due to language difficulties. Also some families may not have as many resources, such as access to computers.

Some students do well in an online environment, while others do not do as well.

### **Outcomes to Support Online Learning**

A website was set up to provide online tutoring for year 12 students.