

Alongside You when the world is turning upside down and against!

The unpredicted has arrived, the truth of suffering evermore visible in this world. We are all impacted by the outbreak of the coronavirus COVID-19, none of us spared. No matter how we reformulate the problem or ignore it like a dream, we are touched by chaos, our 'normal' routines interrupted, and a sense of home ripped away. None of us planned for this when we packed our bags to travel to Australia, our dreams, our lifetime earnings and of our families all sewn onto our bags and suitcases. Yet, we stand here, far away, reaching out, or holding on to what little love and hope we can lay claim to.

The recent survey conducted by the COVID-19 response team led by ABPI amongst the Bhutanese community in Perth indicated a high level of stress, worry and anxiety reported by the participants. Many respondents articulated a strong sense of loss, loss of a sense of stability, fear of the unknown and questions of survival, fear of being outcasted and loss of sense of belonging. At the same time, many voices of dismay, hurt and loss loom in silence.

Alongside You is a free and a safe telephone-counselling service developed by a group of Bhutanese to reach out to the Bhutanese, a culturally attuned service to connect and to listen.

Who are we?

Like you we have travelled far, away from Bhutan, from our familiar homes. We have heard your voices, we live our wounds, so **Alongside You** we long to make sense of our lives.

We are a small team of volunteers with experience, training and tertiary qualifications in counselling.

There are many competent online therapeutic services in Australia for anyone who wishes to seek otherwise. Whilst, **Alongside You** specifically emerged in response to the COVID-19 Response Team's recommendations based on the increasing number of anxious Bhutanese callers and their requests, and the concerns validated by the survey.

What can you expect?

- Free, safe and confidential Telephone counselling service.
- A phone session can be about 30 minutes to an hour.
- Facilitate virtual/phone support groups where necessary and relevant
- Codevelop self-care plans

Call if you are stressed and feel a need to talk; call if you are in a daze or confused; call if the burdens of your mind interfere with your relationships.....

Most of us grew up hearing our elders say 'Sem Dha Zhin Bay' (Guard your mind- an incomplete translation simply) and now is the time! At least this is what we know and get told. Perhaps, an unforgiving lesson for us to enact our innate cultural values and lessons of impermanence, moment to moment spontaneity and the courage to walk into the unknown. But to enact and to embody takes time, courage and wisdom???

Alongside You, a Telecounselling service in support of the Bhutanese in Perth

Volunteer counsellors are available from Monday – Sunday at the following times:

Monday: 9AM- 8PM

Tuesday: 1PM – 8PM

Wednesday: 1PM – 8 PM

Thursday: 10AM- 10PM

Friday: 2PM – 7PM

Saturday: 2PM-10PM

Sunday:10AM – 7PM

Text: 0410971986/0497377792 (9AM-10PM, 7 days) with your preferred times mentioned above and one of the volunteer counsellors will get back to you within 24 hours.

Please note we are not a Crisis service; you can call Lifeline at 131114 for crisis support or call 000 for Emergency.

We have also provided below some links to helpful professional online therapy services if you wish to seek them:

Lifeline:<https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/topics/mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>

Beyondblue:<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support/national-help-lines-and-websites>

Kidshelpline:<https://kidshelpline.com.au/coronavirus>

Counsellingonline:<https://www.counsellingonline.org.au/what-is-counselling-online>

Headtohead:<https://headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/covid-19>

Look out for each other and look after yourself.

“...may we reverse misfortunes, obstacles, ill omens, and anything that inclines to the evil side..”

(The Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra)

