



Supporting families in Hotel Quarantine

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Life in Hotel Quarantine

In March 2020 all international and state borders were closed following the declaration of a Covid-19 pandemic.

All people arriving from overseas were required to self-isolate in their homes for 14 days, however, due to non-compliance hotel quarantine was quickly established across all capital cities to effect the isolation of returned travellers.



Life in Hotel Quarantine

- ▶ Due to speed and changing isolation rules of the developing Covid situation families arriving back into Melbourne received little explanation of what was happening.
- ▶ This combined with misinformation from a confused hotel quarantine workforce created further anxiety for these families.



Life in Hotel Quarantine



Families with infants and children were transported directly from the airport to a hotel without consideration for each family dynamic or situation.

There were two parent families as well as sole parents travelling with young infants who were distressed and fearful due to the uncertainty of not being in their city of origin, or not being able to return to their family homes.



Life in Hotel Quarantine

▶ Although support services were established to help families cope with isolation, staff working in the hotel quarantine system were unsure about where they could reach out to support those families who were really struggling in isolation.





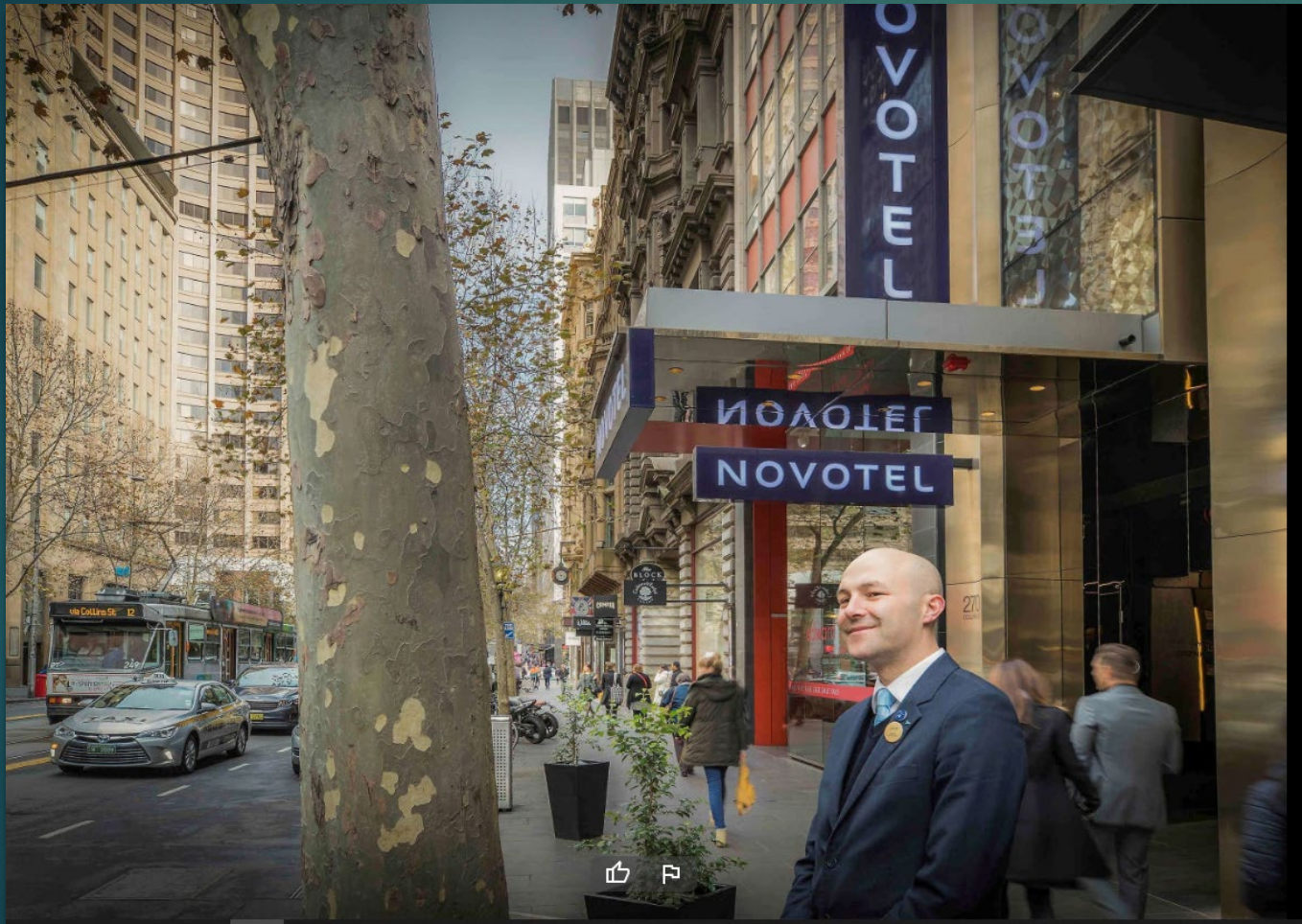
▶ With the number of families returning to Melbourne it quickly became apparent that there were many who had small children and infants.





- ▶ The City of Melbourne received a request from the Department of Health to provide support for these families in hotel quarantine who had a child aged under 5 years of age.
- ▶ As a result, the City's Maternal and Child Health team worked with families in different situations who had different levels of anxiety. Our services were able to provide consults in hotels wearing full Tier-3 PPE and via Telehealth.





► Our very first visit was to the Novotel Hotel in the CBD to visit a first-time mother having arrived from the UK.

► April 2020



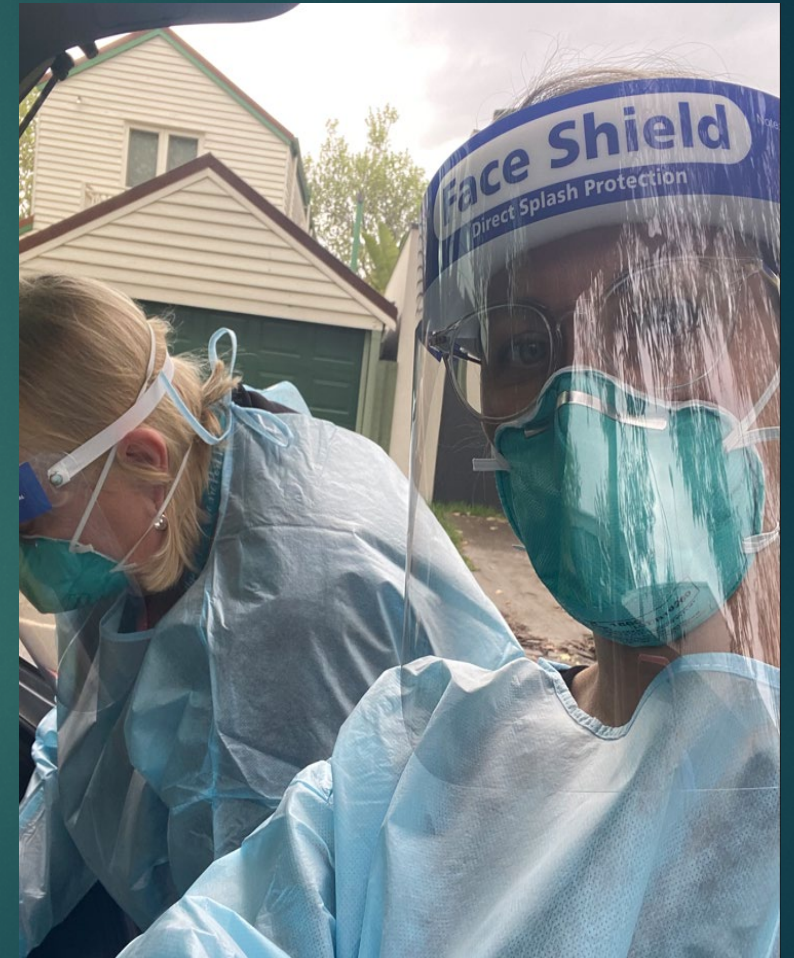
Sally and Phoebe Novotel Hotel

- ▶ On arrival it was chaos.
- ▶ There were security, medical, DHHS staff everywhere,
- ▶ Security Guards interspersed on each level in the corridors
- ▶ The Corridors smelt of smoke.
- ▶ No Covid screening or any screening for staff entering. (I could have been anyone)



Sally and Phoebe

- ▶ I was asked to gown up and I was escorted upstairs to Sally's room.
- ▶ I felt like I was entering into a war zone.



Sally and Phoebe

- Sally was travelling alone with 6-week-old Phoebe to join her partner who was working in Melbourne.
- Sally was struggling with adjusting to being a new mum on her own, she had difficult delivery which father missed.
- She reported that Phoebe had been unsettled on and off since birth.



Sally and Phoebe

- Following entering hotel quarantine, Sally had called DHHS staff in hotel know that baby is not feeding well and her baby was unsettled.
- The room where the family were placed was dark and had a view of a brick wall. Sally was on her own with Phoebe in a smallish dark room, it was gloomy.
- Prior to arrival, her husband had offered to do the 14 day isolation in hotel with mother to offer support to mother so she was not on her own. Request was denied



Sally and Phoebe

- ▶ Visit long.
- ▶ Sally was very distressed. Phoebe was unsettled and fussing at the breast.
- ▶ Sally reported that she was having some dark thoughts and reported to husband via phone call the night prior to my visit “that she didn’t know how she was going to cope and wanted to end it”.



Sally and Phoebe

- ▶ MCH offered:
- ▶ Provided with support, reassurance and listened to her and validated her concerns.
- ▶ Full physical examination
- ▶ B/F support
- ▶ Maternal Health and Wellbeing Assessment including EPDS



Sally and Phoebe

- ▶ OUTCOMES:
- ▶ Report made to Child Protection
- ▶ MCH Nurse reported back to DHHS staff in hotel that Sally needed a room change so she had some light and also some support as she was at risk.
- ▶ MCH wrote a support letter to DHHS to obtain an urgent exemption from isolation.
- ▶ Another visit followed the initial visit to mother to offer lactation support.



Sally and Phoebe

- ▶ DHHS granted an exemption granted and Sally was allowed to isolate with Phoebe in their own home with support of partner.
- ▶ Sally and Phoebe were linked in with an inner metro council following release from quarantine and continued to engage in MCH Services.





Trinny, Sam and Baby Joe Crowne Metropol

- ▶ Trinny and Sam arrived back in Sydney from USA following birth of their first child via surrogate following a long journey to have their first baby.



Trinny, Sam and Joe

- On arrival Trinny and Sam were extremely distressed at having to isolate with their new baby for 2 weeks. They were under the impression that they would be exempt from isolating when they left USA.
- It as was huge shock when they arrived in Sydney to find out that their connecting flight back to Melbourne would see them on a bus to a hotel where they would be quarantining for 14 days.



Trinny, Sam and Joe

- They were very anxious and angry with quarantine staff, causing relationship issues between parents and quarantine staff.
- Trinny was anxious about everything. The fear of the unknown of Covid and how this would impact on her new baby was overwhelming her and causing her to become irrational and angry.
- The surrogate had proved a large supply of EBM which was frozen in hotel fridges, and brought up by security guards for parents to feed. Trinny very unhappy about this. Claimed hotel was dirty and infection control minimal.



Trinny, Sam and Joe

- ▶ MCH called in to support.
- ▶ Explanation of Maternal and Child Health in Victoria and enrolled in the service.
- ▶ Telehealth provided using the KAS Framework to guide support given.
- ▶ Health Promotion discussed and emailed to family so that they had access to the information



Trinny, Sam and Joe

- ▶ Maternal Health and Wellbeing assessment completed as well as a wellbeing assessment for father including EPDS.
- ▶ Also facetimed parents so we could get a visual on baby and reassure parents to best of our ability combined with update given from parents.
- ▶ Second daily phone calls to allow parents ask questions and reassure them.
- ▶ Unable to visit this family in hotel as they refused Covid testing.



Trinny, Sam and Joe

- ▶ Family relaxed over the 14 day period with the support provided and whilst critical of the entire process learned to trust in the process until their time in quarantine was up.
- On release from isolation the family were linked in with MCH Service in LGA where they live and follow up appointments made.



Kellie and Iris Crowne Metropol

- ▶ Kellie was a first time mother. She resided in Adelaide but was originally from Iran.
- ▶ In January 2020 Kellie went to her home country to visit her family prior to having baby.
- ▶ Kellie got caught in Iran when borders closed and gave birth in Iran. Her husband was unable to travel due to border closure and remained in Adelaide.



Kellie and Iris Crowne Metropol

- ▶ Kellie and Iris returned to Australia June 2020 on their own and endured an 18 hour stop over in Qatar on the way home.
- ▶ Total travel time took 36 hours.
- ▶ She and Iris flew into Melbourne and were told she would need to isolate in Melbourne for 14 days not in Adelaide as she thought she would be.



Kellie and Iris

- ▶ Kellie had limited English and was very upset and frightened. She was on her own in a city unknown to her with an 8-week-old baby who was very distressed.
- ▶ MCH team called in to provide support. Concerns for mother and baby. Both very distressed.



Kellie and Iris

- ▶ MCH Consult done via telehealth.
- ▶ Unable to complete consult due to baby being so distressed and mother being so distressed.
- ▶ Mental Health worker at hotel contacted to go up to room to offer face to face support.



Kellie and Iris

- ▶ CAT team contacted for assessment.
- ▶ Child Protection contacted (child at risk)
- ▶ DHHS flew father from Adelaide so he could do the isolation with mother and baby in hotel room.
- ▶ With good support mother's anxiety subsided substantially.



Kellie and Iris

- ▶ MCH continued to support family during the 14 days offering:
- ▶ Telehealth consults provided.
- ▶ Health Promotion discussed and emailed to parents.
- ▶ Family flew back to Adelaide at end of 14 days for a ? Another 14 days of isolation.
- ▶ Family linked in Child and Family Health Services in Adelaide and appointments made.



Jenny, Peter and Rex Crowne Promenade

- ▶ Jenny and Peter were living in Malaysia. Peter was born in Russian but as a child came to Australia to live and also spent some time in New Zealand growing up. As a result he held citizenship in both Australia and NZ.
- ▶ Jenny is Malaysian. Both professionals working in Malaysia.



Jenny, Peter and Rex

- ▶ Jenny and Peter came to Melbourne early 2020 to give birth to their baby.
- ▶ Jenny on a tourist visa and couple realized they were not covered under Medicare to birth at Royal Women's Hospital.
- ▶ Decided to go to New Zealand where they could have the baby and were covered medically as father had also lived in NZ as a child



Jenny, Peter and Rex Crowne Promenade

- ▶ Jenny's pregnancy was complicated with a breech presentation requiring a LUSCS which delayed the return to Melbourne until mother was recovered.
- ▶ By the time they were able to travel borders had closed and couple were required to completed isolation on hotel.



Jenny, Peter and Rex

- ▶ MCH Service introduced to family and enrolled into the Service. Telehealth consults completed every second day
- ▶ Health Promotion information discussed and emailed to parents so they had access to all the information they needed to support them.
- ▶ Baby was thriving and parents managed really well.
- ▶ Jenny and Peter really enjoyed their experience in isolation and welcomed the support via telehealth. Jenny enjoyed so much she wished she could have stayed longer.
- ▶ Following discharge they were linked in with local LGA where they were planning to stay and would most likely have needed to stay for an extended period due to international lockdowns.





Overall it was extremely challenging for families who were in isolation for the 14 days.

Our aim was to support these families with reassurance and strategies on how to manage themselves and their children.

It was chaotic at times but after a few weeks of sorting out a process and getting to know the staff at the hotels and they in turn getting to know the MCH Team communication channels improved and support for the families was provided quickly.



Thankyou

