



Helpful Tips and Resources to Support yourself and Others

From those who have been there

Remember to check out www.mieact.org.au

Being Empathetic

Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes and understand how a situation might have someone feel.

Here are 5 steps you may find helpful. Once you have checked in an asked someone how they are:

1. **Meet them:** Try to put yourself in their shoes and understand how they might feel and meet them where they are (emotionally).
2. **Listen and Hear:** Show this by looking at them when they speak, nodding when you understand, not interrupting, asking questions to clarify and summarise, e.g. 'What I'm hearing is...'
3. **Recognise and validate their emotions and how they feel:** Reflect back what they have said (using the words they did), e.g. 'I can hear that you are feeling...'. Validate by letting them know that what they are going through is significant.
4. **Acknowledge their pain with acceptance and without judgement:** Being accepted and understood are often why people share with others so make sure you are doing this when someone shares with you, don't question what they say affect it, e.g. 'That really sucks' OR 'That sounds really challenging
5. **Show gratitude that they have opened up:** Opening up when you are in pain is hard, so show them that you appreciate this, e.g. 'Thank you for sharing with me. I am here for you' OR 'That must be so hard to talk about, I appreciate you sharing with me'.

Things to Remember about being Empathetic

Being empathetic towards others helps them to open up and speak about how they're feeling.

Please remember:

You are not a psychologist or Doctor and it's not your job to provide treatment options. Just by being an empathetic classmate or friend you are making a HUGE difference.

You don't need to respond with a solution or fix their problems. You don't even need to know what to say, saying something like 'I don't even know what to say. That sounds horrible...' and listening non-judgmentally can be enough.

You may like to suggest that the person going through tough times speaks with a trusted adult (speaking with a parent, counsellor, teacher etc.).

If you are worried about someone's safety always seek help from a trusted adult as soon as possible.

Other people's concerns are not something you need to carry around with you so if you are struggling to cope with the weight of others' challenges, reach out for help.

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What are you doing for your S-E-L-F today?

Looking after the fundamental aspects of our health is pivotal to greater wellbeing. When caring for ourselves and others, especially at times of overwhelm, it is helpful to take a step back and focus on nailing the basics.

Take some time to think about how you are meeting your S-E-L-F needs. Sleep, Exercise, Leisure and Food all play a part in promoting greater physical and mental health. As a guide:

1. Aim to get between 7-9 hours of sleep each day
2. Break down your favourite exercise into smaller time slots. 3 x 10mins can be just as beneficial as 1x30mins!
3. Find a leisure interest that brings you joy and schedule it into your day.
4. Include healthy foods like fruit, vegetables, wholegrains and fish in your diet

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Who do you reach out to when you feel alone?

Statistics show that 45 percent of Australians will experience a mental illness of some kind at some point in their lives. This means that although it may feel like it, we are NOT alone in our experience.

Talking about our experiences of mental illness openly does two main things;

1. It reduces the stigma surrounding mental illness within our communities,
2. It connects us to help from others for our mental health concerns

To build your connections to help and support:

- Reach out to a trusted person in your support network
- Talk about your concerns with support people in your school, university, workplace or religious communities
- Access professional support through your doctor or directly through mental health services available via phone or internet (lifeline, headspace etc.)
- KEEP reaching out to different people until someone hears your concern

Who do you reach out to when you feel alone?

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If you'd like to get some help, this list of organisations and services is a great place to start.

Some tips for using mental health services

1. Do some research so you can choose the service that suits you best. Check what they specialise in and whether this matches what you need right now.
2. Think about what will give you the most benefit. Is it a phone call, email support, SMS, chat or a talk face-to-face?
3. When you contact the service, you only have to share what you feel comfortable sharing. You can write it down if that makes it easier.
4. You might be disappointed if the psychologist or counsellor you choose to see isn't a good match. Just because they're a professional, doesn't mean they are the right person to support you. Maybe you don't get along or you feel that they don't relate well to you as an individual. It's okay to look for another option.
5. You may also find that your favourite support person for most things doesn't have the experience or knowledge with mental health to be able to give you the right advice. Try to be open to new possibilities and new support relationships.
6. Remember that finding the right person can sometimes take a while. This can be frustrating. But when you find a good match for you, it can make a really big difference. Don't give up.

Am I the only one who finds it hard to talk about how I feel?

It's normal to feel afraid about sharing how you feel with someone else. It's important to remember:

- Seeking help takes courage. But you can do it!
- Mental health issues are common. You are not alone.
- People's ideas about mental health can sometimes come from not knowing enough about it
- Speaking openly and honestly about mental health and sharing real stories about mental illness can help reduce ideas that aren't true
- Asking for support can help you feel strong and independent because it teaches you things you can do yourself to help you feel better
- Seeking help can assist you to support others when they are going through a tough time



[13 11 14](http://131114.org.au)

Provides access to crisis support, **suicide prevention** and mental health services.



[1300 22 4636](http://1300224636.com.au)

24/7 online support service.

Increasing awareness around **depression, anxiety** and **substance use** issues around Australia.

[1800 18 7263](http://1800187263.com.au)



Mental health awareness, **online peer support** and information, **stigma reduction**, specialist helpline support, research and advocacy.



Internationally recognised as a pioneer in the identification, **prevention and treatment of mental illness**. Here you'll find information on getting help for:



24/7 support, loads of stories, and resources for mental health issues.



Foundation for Eating Disorders, providing information and support.



A national youth organisation helping young people with mental health challenges such as **depression and anxiety**.



Will help you find a psychologist in your area.



1800 55 1800

Free and private counselling service for kids **aged 5-25**.



A national counselling referral service for **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI)** people.



02 6296 8900

Free counselling service for **men aged 12-25**.



1300 659 467

Provides immediate telephone and online counselling and support in a crisis.



02 6296 8900

Free **Indigenous health service**, for those aged 0-25.



02 6232 2423

Free health and support service for those **aged 12-25 years**.



Online education and self-help.



Modern meditation for supporting **healthy minds**



Guided Meditation for kids and adults

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Mental Health Affects Everyone, Remember that

What can you do for Self-Care?



**Remember, it's OK to not
be OK. You are not alone
in this. Reach out!**

**Be the change you want to
see in YOUR world!**