

let's talk

building social connections



Positive social connections are essential for our overall wellbeing and can help us to cope during difficult times.

The social networks that we create through relationships, social activities, lived experiences, work or spiritual / cultural groups allow us to feel a sense of connectedness and community. These positive relationships can lower levels of anxiety and depression, while raising self-esteem.

While there may be times in our lives when we may not feel like staying connected, isolation can make it harder to cope during difficult times and make it tougher to recover. Whether it is spending time with loved ones, chatting to a friend, joining a sports team or group of like-minded people, going to a place of worship or waving to your neighbour, staying emotionally and socially connected can have a positive effect on your mental health and overall wellbeing. Meaningful relationships don't just make us feel good, but they are a fundamental need.

Connecting in isolation:

Spending quality time with people you live with:

- Board games
- Gardening
- Creative Craft
- Music

Phone a friend

Make a phone call to a friend or family member that you haven't spoken to for a while.

Video calls

- Facebook
- Skype
- Zoom
- Apps like House Party or Google Hangouts

Online forums

Online forums are a great way to stay connected digitally. You may choose to find a forum that relates to a hobby or there are also some great forums that are designed to support mental health and well being such as Beyond Blue, Counselling Online, Headspace and SANE.

Social media

While social media can be a great way to stay connected, extensive exposure to negative information can be harmful to our mental health. If your social media feed puts you in a negative mindset, try using alternate ways to stay connected. You can also complete a social media "cleanse" where you only follow accounts that make you feel good.

Online clubs and groups

Find a group of like-minded people to engage with in a mutual hobby with. This could be done face to face if available but don't forget a lot of groups are now available online:

- Book Clubs
- Fitness Clubs
- Cultural groups
- Cooking groups
- Music groups
- Online gaming community

Adopt a pet

Although human connection is important, animals can also be great companions especially if you live on your own.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger call 000 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

Looking after yourself

In tough times we also need to remember to look after ourselves. Taking care of yourself is important, as it will increase your capacity to deal with stress.

- Try to have some time out
- Do things you enjoy



- Keep in touch with family, friends and neighbours
- Reflect on the good stuff
- Eat well, sleep well and only use alcohol in moderation

How to take action...

GP - Contact a local general practitioner (GP).

Head to Health – headtohealth.gov.au

Find Australian mental health services and resources.

Alcohol Drug Information Service – **1800 250 015**

24/7 confidential telephone line providing advice, referral and support. Web chat Mon-Fri 8.30am - 5pm.

Beyond Blue Support Service - **1300 224 636**

beyondblue.org.au

24/7 counselling and support services available.

Kids Helpline - **1800 55 1800** kidshelpline.com.au

Free online and telephone counselling for young people aged 5-25.

Lifeline – **13 11 14**

24/7 confidential telephone line for crisis support.

NSW Mental Health Line – **1800 011 511**

24/7 telephone line providing advice and referral.

MensLine - **1300 789 978** mensline.org.au

24/7 telephone, online chat and video counselling services for men with emotional health and relationship concerns.

SANE Australia - **1800 18 7263** sane.org

Counselling, referrals and information for adults with mental illness, trauma and psychological distress. Available weekdays by phone, email or web chat from 10am-10pm.

Suicide Call Back Service – **1300 659 467**

24/7 telephone line for anyone affected by suicide.

1800 RESPECT - **1800 737 732**

1800respect.org.au

24/7 telephone and online support services for sexual assault, domestic and family violence.

Contact
your local
RAMHP
Coordinator

RAMHP has Coordinators based across NSW who provide specialist knowledge and support for people experiencing mental health concerns

VISIT www.ramhp.com.au