

# let's talk rural adversity



Rural communities are resilient and resourceful with people relying on being able to solve problems and overcome challenges. However in adverse conditions or disasters, there are often factors that are out of our control and that can cause significant stress. When we are busy or stressed, looking after our mental and physical health can often be forgotten but it is important to manage our health to ensure that we can make clear decisions and cope with other stressors in our life.

## Signs someone may be struggling

- Anger or irritability
- Worry or nervousness
- Loss of concentration
- Loss of interest
- Low energy
- Social withdrawal
- Relationship issues
- Unusual headaches and body aches
- Changes in sleeping and eating patterns
- Increased drug or alcohol use

When someone is under prolonged pressure, they may have difficulty making decisions regarding their finances, stock or relationships. If someone is showing signs of struggling, it is important to talk about it and take action as soon as possible.

### Having a conversation

When having a conversation, chat to the person in a comfortable place about what you have noticed and why you are concerned. You do not need to fix their problems but you need to listen to their concerns and reassure the person that there is help available.

### Ways you can start the conversation

*"I haven't seen you around much lately, ...what's been happening?"*

*"Things have been tough, how are you coping?"*

*"There's been a lot going on, how are you managing?"*

*"I've noticed that..., how are you going?"*

*If a person shows signs of stress,  
encourage them to take action*

## 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

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

# When to get help

While it's normal to be distressed or upset by a rural adversity or disaster, you should see a mental health professional if you are experiencing:

- extreme feelings of distress
- distress that is interfering with your ability to carry out day-to-day activities
- withdrawal from usual relationships or avoiding pleasurable activities
- feelings of overwhelming fear for no apparent reason
- feelings of excessive guilt
- using alcohol or other substances to cope
- a loss of interest in the future
- thoughts of self-harm or suicide

## How to take action...

**GP** – Contact a local general practitioner (GP).

**Head to Health** – [headtohealth.gov.au](http://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](http://beyondblue.org.au)

24/7 counselling and support services available.

**Kids Helpline** - 1800 55 1800 [kidshelpline.com.au](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://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](http://www.ramhp.com.au)



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