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VICTORIA

HEALTHY

Mind
+
Body

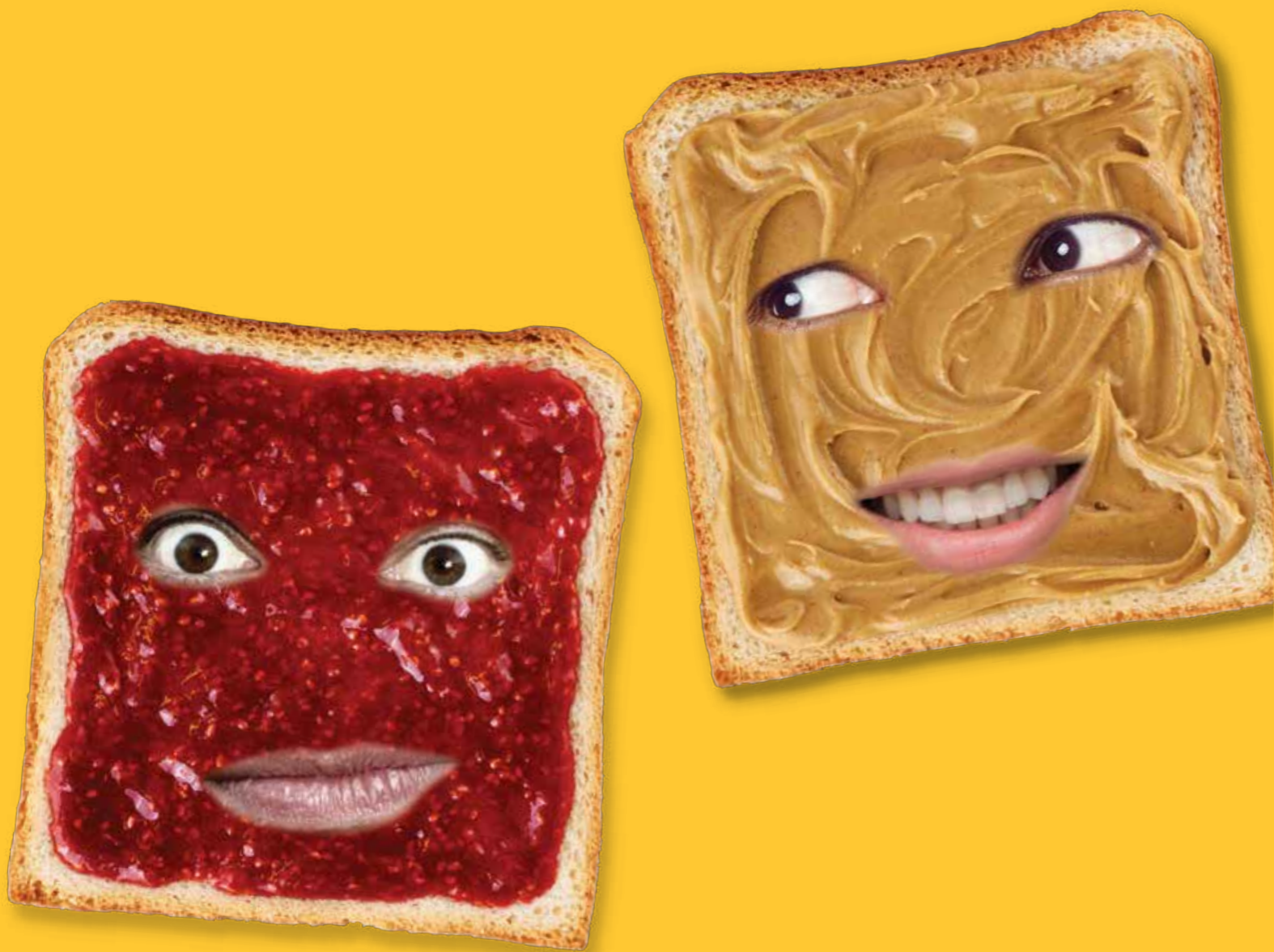


#FriendBetter with **RUOK?**TM

Tips to help you support your mates



Working together



ruok.org.au

Victorian Police have been working alongside the community for many years and in various ways. PCYCs are excellent examples of how local police and community work together to provide access and opportunities for our youth.

Today, PCYCs remain a very worthwhile community-based proactive initiative. Local communities continue to be involved in the establishment of these viable and long-term community resources that provide recreation and entertainment for youth, specifically those at risk of anti-social behaviour and those who are disadvantaged.

The Victoria Police Youth Affairs Office supports and gives advice to the PCYCs, however, Victorian PCYCs are all run independently by Management Committees. These committees are made up of local police, community members and local youth.

The Mission of PCYCs is **'Developing our future through helping young people'**. With this in mind, PCYCs have the following aims:

- To have shared respect between police, community and young people
- To reduce the incidence of young people becoming offenders or victims of crime
- To develop young people's self-esteem, confidence, social and leadership skills
- To provide opportunities for challenge and excitement through law abiding behaviour
- To encourage the principles of good citizenship

To remain relevant in the community, PCYCs offer a substantially different form of activities and programs that fill a need within the fitness, recreational and social market. PCYCs aim to provide a wide range of sporting activities designed to promote good citizenship within

local communities generally and for the disadvantaged and youth at risk. PCYCs provide a safe meeting place for local youth to participate in a number of activities such as craft, video nights, billiards, computer/homework sessions, boxing, basketball, day trips, gym work, self-defence etc. These clubs exist in suburbs of Melbourne and also in country areas.

PCYCs continue to be viable and relevant community resources and we trust that you will find this handbook to be a handy resource as well. Under the skill and guidance from our publishers, Countrywide Austral, and the generous assistance provided through businesses and supporters, we believe we have produced a vital resource that will assist youth in dealing with a wide range of life skills and issues.

Thank you for assisting Victorian PCYCs with this project and we urge you to support those who have got behind us to make this possible.

For locations of Victorian PCYCs visit our link site at: www.police.vic.gov.au



A special thank you to our valued Patrons of the Streetsmart Handbook



Lesa Gale

Deputy Commissioner Lesa Gale APM
AFP Deputy Commissioner International and Specialist Capabilities

As the Australian Federal Police Assistant Commissioner responsible for the Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation, it's my job to highlight to you the importance of protecting yourself and where to get help if something goes wrong both in the online and real world. I recommend to you the Streetsmart Handbook which does just that. It contains answers to your many questions about being part of a safe, healthy and connected community. It will point you in the right direction of how to access government and other services that can provide advice and support and empower you through your teenage years into adulthood.

As you choose your own path – keep this book nearby so you are informed with all the important tools you will need at your fingertips. The decisions you make now will impact you for the rest of your life. We all make mistakes – it's how we recover from those mistakes that's important. The Streetsmart Handbook will help you make fewer mistakes and guide you through how you recover from the mistakes you do make.

This Streetsmart Handbook has been developed to guide you over the coming years and contains information to answer some of your questions and to point you toward sources of additional support as you seek to maintain a healthy mind, body and relationships.

Good luck! I wish you all the very best.



Liana Buchanan

Principal Commissioner for Children and Young People (Victoria)

Moving into adulthood is an exciting time. It is filled with new opportunities, adventures and freedoms, waiting to be explored and discovered. But it can be a scary time too. Suddenly you are faced with a whole new range of decisions and responsibilities that you have never had to deal with before.

Some of the best lessons I've learnt in my life have come from making mistakes and learning from my experiences. But there have also been times where I've been grateful to get some really helpful advice that has stopped me from making mistakes in the first place.

The Streetsmart Handbook is a collection of all the snippets of information and advice you need when you're entering the adult world, in a single compact book.

Whether you are moving out of home, trying to get a driver's licence, deciding on a career or wanting some health and wellbeing tips; this book has got it covered. It will give you practical tools to negotiate with a dodgy landlord, help you avoid creeps on the internet, buy your first car and set a sensible budget. It will also save you a lot of Googling.

I hope this handbook helps you face the good, bad and boring parts of adulthood with confidence and calm. Getting the basics right will help free up more time and energy on what is most important: enjoying and making the most of this exciting time.



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We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer

This publication contains images of Indigenous people that have been sourced/purchased from image galleries. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are warned that these may include images of deceased persons.

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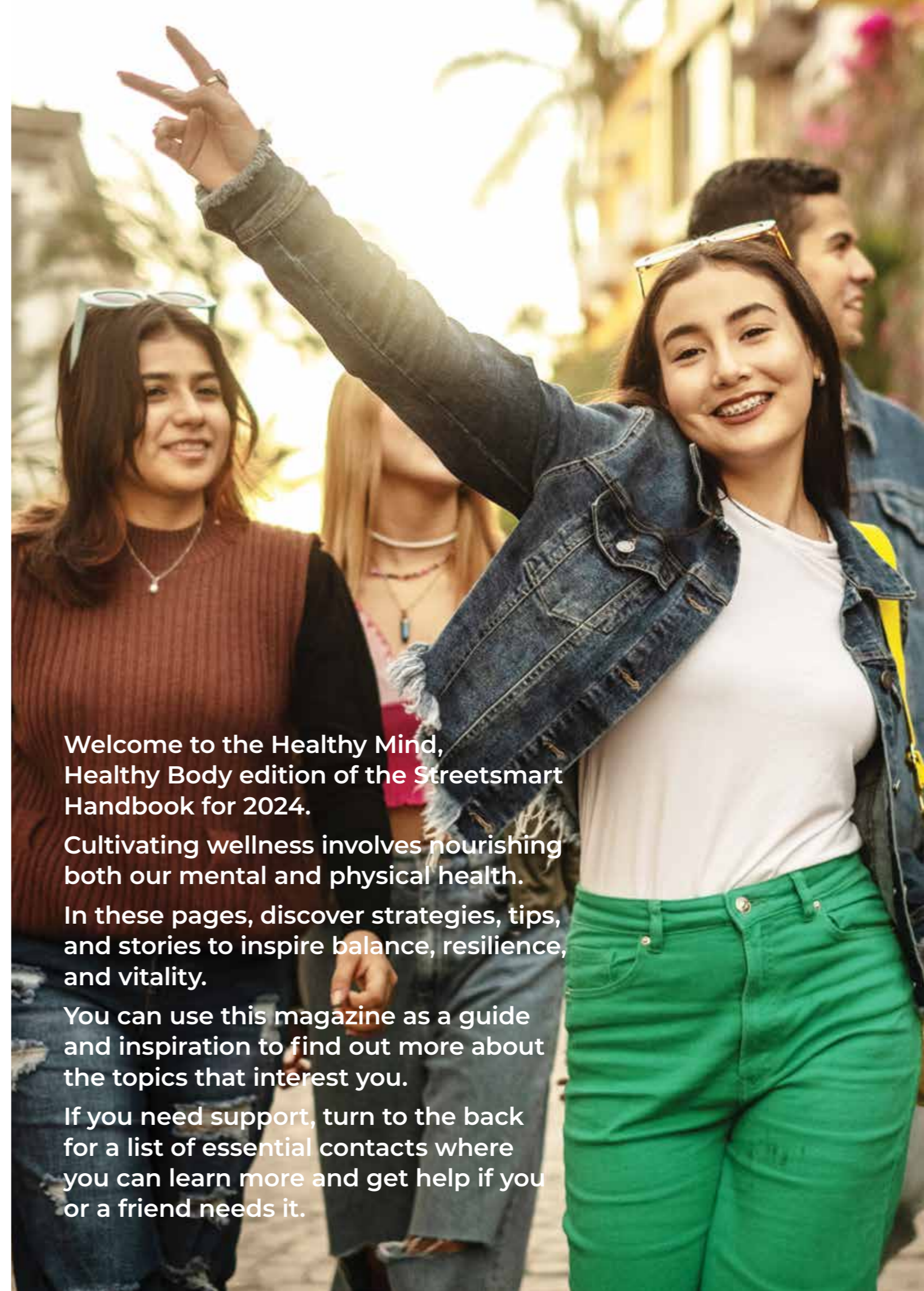
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Welcome to the Healthy Mind,
Healthy Body edition of the StreetSmart
Handbook for 2024.

Cultivating wellness involves nourishing
both our mental and physical health.

In these pages, discover strategies, tips,
and stories to inspire balance, resilience,
and vitality.

You can use this magazine as a guide
and inspiration to find out more about
the topics that interest you.

If you need support, turn to the back
for a list of essential contacts where
you can learn more and get help if you
or a friend needs it.



Healthy Mind

Good mental health is about being able to work and study to your full potential, cope with day-to-day life stresses, be involved in your community, and live your life in a free and satisfying way.

A person who has good mental health has good emotional and social wellbeing and the capacity to cope with change and challenges.

Content for this section is courtesy of



For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre or for online and telephone support, visit [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au)

Top tips for a healthy headspace

Positive mental health is crucial for young people to thrive. It builds emotional resilience, enables effective coping mechanisms to deal with challenges, stress, and transitions, and it enhances cognitive function that supports learning and academic success.

Positive mental health also influences social relationships, promoting healthy connections and communication.

Moreover, it lays the foundation for self-esteem, confidence, and a sense of purpose, essential for navigating the complexities of adolescence.

In this chapter, we explore ways to keep your mental health on the up!

Sleep well

Getting a good night's sleep helps you feel energised, focused and motivated. Adolescence is a time when a number of changes to the 'body clock' impact on sleeping patterns and you are more likely to have problems with sleep. Developing a sleeping routine can help you sleep much better. To do this try to wake up around the same time each day, get out of bed when you wake up, and go to bed around the same time each night. Avoiding caffeine after lunchtime, having a quiet, dark and uncluttered bedroom and shutting down your phone, laptop and other electronic devices before bed can also help you get a good night's sleep.

Turn to page 52 for more about the importance of good sleep.

Physical activity

Physical activity is important for everyone's health and wellbeing. If you're feeling down or finding things are difficult, physical activity may be the last thing you feel like doing. But even small activities like walking around the block can help relieve stress and frustration, provide a good distraction from your thoughts, help you concentrate and can help you look and feel better. Find a physical activity that you enjoy (e.g. swimming, playing sports with friends or cycling) and make a plan to do it regularly.

Turn to page 49 for more about the importance of physical activity

Get informed

Understanding more about what you're going through is an important first step. Information to help you make good decisions about relationships, school, finances and seeking help is available in a number of ways. Read pamphlets, articles or fact sheets, listen to podcasts, talk to or watch videos about others who have had similar experiences, read trusted websites for information, or ask a trusted adult for advice.

Turn to page 56 for links to resources.

Coping strategies

There are various positive coping strategies you can try to keep your mental health on the positive side: exercise, relaxation techniques, talking to someone, writing or art. Experiment with what works best for you. There is no one size fits all and often it will be a combination of these examples and not just one.

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Set realistic goals

Setting realistic goals can help you to work towards a healthy headspace. Small, realistic goals can be a great way to work towards feeling well – everyone has to start somewhere. Work towards eating well, getting more active, sleeping better and also think about working towards long-term life goals. Setting and achieving realistic goals can be incredibly motivating and can help build self-confidence.

Be socially active and get involved

Social relationships are really important to your general wellbeing. It is okay to take time out for yourself but friends can provide support when you're having a tough time. Spending time with friends is also really important for keeping and building on existing friendships. Getting involved with volunteer work, hobbies, clubs or committees, or sports can help you feel connected to your wider community while also meeting new people. If you're not feeling up to going out, even a phone call, email, text message or Facebook message can help us feel connected to friends and family.

Relax

There are many ways to relax and different relaxation techniques to use to overcome stress. Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing and relaxing specific groups of muscles from your feet all the way to your head, while focusing on your feelings of tension and relaxation. You could also try breathing techniques, such as deep breathing or focused breathing (breathing in through the nose and as you breathe out say a positive statement to yourself like 'relax' or 'calm down'). Place a hand over your diaphragm to make sure you're breathing slowly – you should feel your hand move if you're doing it right. Focus on breathing in slowly for four seconds, holding your breath for two seconds and breathing out slowly for six seconds.



Eat well

Eating well doesn't only reduce the risk of physical health problems, like heart disease and diabetes, but it can also help with your sleeping patterns, energy levels, and your general health and wellbeing. You might have noticed that your mood can affect your appetite and food intake. A good balanced diet with less of the bad things (e.g. junk food and lots of sugars) and more of the good things (e.g. vegies, fruit, wholegrains and plenty of water) will make sure you have all of the vitamins and minerals to help your body and brain function well.



Help, and be kind to, others

Do something to help someone else. Acts of kindness help other people but also make you feel good. Give a compliment, offer to help someone out or volunteer on a once-off project or ongoing, and allow yourself to feel good for making someone else feel good.



Play

Play is important for staying mentally healthy. Devoting time to just having fun can recharge your battery, revitalise your social networks, and reduce stress and anxiety.



Develop assertiveness skills

Being assertive means standing up for your own rights, valuing yourself and valuing others' opinions without letting them dominate you. This can help build your self-esteem and self-respect. Being assertive is not the same as being aggressive. Remember to always listen, be prepared to compromise and be respectful of the other person's opinion, while still being confident, calm and knowing what you want.



Seek help

A problem can sometimes be too hard to solve alone, even with support from friends and family. Be honest with yourself about when you may need support and get professional help. You can see your general practitioner (GP), make an appointment to chat to someone at your local headspace centre or visit headspace.org.au. Finding help might feel scary at the start but it gets easier over time. Getting support can help you to keep on track with school, study or work, and in your personal and family relationships. The sooner you get help the sooner things can begin to improve for you.

Practice conflict resolution

Having a hard time with friends or family is difficult for most people. Talking through the issues in a calm and thoughtful way is the best approach. Avoid getting personal, be willing to compromise and listen to their perspective.



Change your self-talk

Self-talk is the way that you talk to yourself, that voice inside your head. It can be positive (e.g. "I can make it through this exam") or negative (e.g. "I'm never going to be able to pass this subject"). There are a number of things you can do to change the direction of your self-talk. First, listen to your inner voice – is your self-talk helping you or reinforcing bad feelings? Next, try to replace your negative thoughts with more realistic ones. Try to look for a more rational spin on your situation or think of strategies to tackle your problems, rather than giving up hope. By working on your self-talk the more you'll feel confident and in control of yourself.

Kick back with an app

Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind is a free guided meditation app that can help you relax and improve your mental health. The app allows you to choose from a variety of meditation programs of different lengths designed for different ages. Programs help relieve the pressure, stress and challenges of daily life.



#FriendBetter with R U OK?™

Talking to a mate who is stressed about finances

Life is expensive.

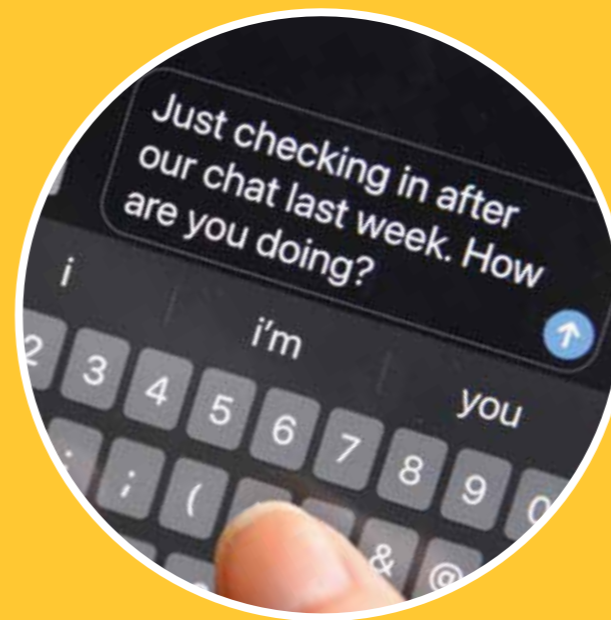
Working, studying, and socialising on a budget can be challenging, and at times feel impossible. Your friend might be struggling with managing their finances for the first time, juggling study and work, having an entry-level income, dealing with inconsistent casual hours, paying rent or trying to balance socialising with prioritising their wellbeing. It's also becoming increasingly difficult to organise and afford stable, safe housing and that can have a big impact on our wellbeing.

If you think your friend might be struggling with money or housing, there are a few things you can do to help.

Spot The Signs

Money troubles can be difficult to talk about, so your friend might not feel comfortable bringing it up. But there are signs you can look for that might indicate financial stress.

- **Frequently talking about how expensive things are:** They might not say outright, 'I'm struggling with money', but if they are commenting frequently on the expense of groceries, bills, everyday items, events and/or their income it might be a sign they're having money worries.
- **Hesitant to socialise:** They love hanging out but lately they've been declining or not showing up to social events. They could be too scared to tell you why they can't come, so avoiding events might be their way of managing money.
- **Awkward or argumentative when money is mentioned:** Maybe they're silent when you and your friends are talking about money/finances, or defensive if you ask them directly how they afford things.
- **Low mood:** Ongoing financial stress might cause a sudden and sustained change in mood, such as feeling down, negative talk or low energy.
- **Overusing credit:** Do they often use credit cards or other buy-now-pay-later mechanisms? It doesn't always mean they're having trouble with money, but it might be helpful to check in.
- **Obsessing about making more money:** Are they always talking about ways that they could make more money? Are they taking on too much paid work that leaves them exhausted and with time for nothing else?
- **Housing stress:** They are currently not in stable housing or seem to be stressed about the costs or conditions of their living situation. Alternatively, they may seem uncomfortable even discussing the topic.



What To Say & Do

It can be hard to know what to say or how to support when a friend is worried about money. R U OK? have put together some tips to help you.

- **Check in:** If you notice signs your friend isn't OK, simply asking how they're doing and starting a conversation is a great first step.
- **Listen:** If they're ready to talk about it, let them share and listen carefully. It might be tempting to offer money or pay for them (if you're able to) to 'fix' the problem. But this isn't the solution. They will get a lot more out of having you listen to them and talking through solutions together.
- **Suggest budget friendly hangouts:** Socialising every weekend can get expensive, but it doesn't have to be! Try free activities like; heading to the beach, going for a walk, local free events, movie night in, BBQ in a mate's backyard, and the list goes on.
- **Share resources:** There are loads of cool articles, apps and videos out there to help set budgets, track spending and manage money. Your friend might not know they exist, so sharing these tools can help them feel in control of their finances. Check out 'helpful resources' opposite.
- **Encourage them to seek professional help:** Remember, you don't have to have all the answers or get to the bottom of their money stress. Let them know that you want to support them, but you think it might be helpful for them to chat to a professional (such as a free psychologist through school/uni, a financial counsellor or a helpline) to get advice and strategies on how to manage their challenges.

Be mindful

Helping a friend struggling with financial stress doesn't mean you need to pay for them or lend them money. Make sure you set boundaries and look after your own financial wellbeing.

“Try free activities like; heading to the beach, going for a walk, local free events, movie night in, BBQ in a mate's backyard, and the list goes on.”



Helpful Resources

Keep these resources handy for you and your friend.

- **National Debt Line** to chat to a financial counsellor **1800 007 007**
- Support services, chat rooms and other resources for young people to seek help:
- Visit ReachOut.com articles and tools for managing money
- Visit headspace.org.au for tips on controlling finances
- Call **headspace** on **1800 650 890** (9am – 1am AEST every day)
- Call **Beyond Blue** on **1300 22 4636** (24/7)
- Call **Kids Helpline** **1800 55 1800** (24/7, Ages 5-25) or webchat at kidshelpline.com.au (24/7, Ages 5-25)

About #FriendBetter with R U OK?

Like good friends, some things are just better together. The support of a good mate can help someone feel connected and supported as they navigate life's ups and downs.

This can include exam and study pressure, financial stress, mental ill-health and navigating relationships. We all want to be there for our friends when they're struggling, but sometimes it can be tricky to know what to say and do.

That's why R U OK? have put together free resources, to help you #FriendBetter and know how to have those important conversations.

For free tips to help you support your mates visit ruok.org.au/friendbetter



Stop the Bullying

Bullying is when an individual or group uses its power and strength to repeatedly, deliberately and intentionally use words or actions against another or a group that hurts, threatens, excludes, harasses, humiliates verbally, physically, psychologically or electronically making the victim feel oppressed, traumatised and powerless.

Bullying can have a significant and long-lasting impact on a person's life. Let's learn a bit more about what it is, what it isn't and what you can do to stop it happening in your school.

Let's talk about the B-word

What is bullying?

The sort of repeated behaviour that can be considered bullying includes:

- Keeping someone out of a group (online or offline)
- Acting in an unpleasant way near or towards someone
- Giving nasty looks, making rude gestures, calling names, being rude and impolite, and constant negative teasing
- Spreading rumours or lies, or misrepresenting someone (i.e. using their Facebook account to post messages as if it were them)
- Harassing someone based on their race, sex, religion, gender or a disability
- Intentionally and repeatedly hurting someone physically
- Intentionally stalking someone
- Taking advantage of any power over someone else like a prefect or a student representative

What is not bullying?

Sometimes kids are just mean or maybe they are having a bad day or an incident occurs that was not really meant to cause harm. Bullying is not:

- One-off incidents that are not repeated
- Having a bad mood or disagreeing with another individual's point of view
- Apologising for behaviour immediately
- Bumping into someone unintentionally
- Statements of dislike towards another/expressions of unpleasant feelings towards another
- A single act of telling a joke that has no intention to make the other feel hurt or embarrassed
- Some non-verbal behaviours, i.e. social rejection/dislike, not hanging out with someone, or choosing a different group to hang out with are not bullying unless that behaviour involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike

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Types of bullying



Physical bullying

Physical bullying involves the use of or threat to use physical force and could involve: pushing, punching, spitting, biting, kicking, hitting, damage to belongings, locking the victim in a confined area, group intimidation (mobbing/ganging up/group bullying) and intimidating the victim to commit involuntary actions.

Verbal bullying

Verbal bullying is the use of words to taunt, threaten, insult, yell, embarrass, put down, swear, mock, threaten or intimidate the victim alone or in front of others. It is the most common form of bullying in Australia. Verbal remarks, some jokes, sarcasm, name calling, teasing and other discriminatory behaviour could be considered funny to some, but such remarks can make others feel self-conscious, embarrassed, anxious and hopeless, and lead to serious cases of insecurity and low self-esteem.



Emotional/social/psychological/indirect bullying

This form of bullying is common in peer relationships in which another person may make statements or commit actions that distress another individual and affect their self-esteem and confidence. Examples of this form of bullying include:

- Social alienation and deliberately excluding/leaving an individual out of activities
- Encouraging others to reject or exclude the individual
- Creating and spreading unkind rumours and gossip

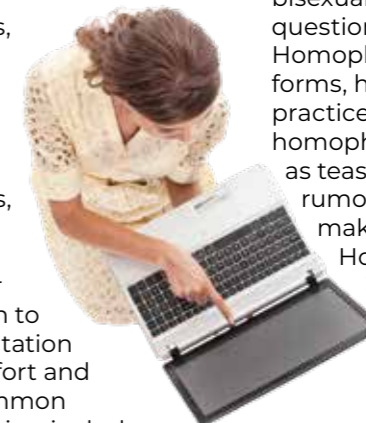
Racial bullying

Racial bullying is regarded as hostile and offensive actions against an individual because of their ethnicity, country of origin, race, skin colour, cultural and religious background and practices. Examples of this kind of bullying include:

- Physical, verbal and emotional abuse
- Targeted comments that are insulting and degrading in nature, such as name-calling, gestures, taunts, insults and jokes based on racial differences
- Offensive vandalism, such as offensive graffiti and comments, directed towards a group
- Patronising and making fun of an individual's customs, music, accent, dress and physical appearance
- The refusal to work, co-operate or engage with others because of their race, culture or religion

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the deliberate use of social media platforms, information and communication technologies, new media technologies (i.e. email, phones, chat rooms, discussion groups, instant messaging, blogs, video clips, cameras, hate websites/pages, blogs and gaming sites) to repeatedly harass, threaten, harm, humiliate and victimise another with the intention to cause harm, reputation damage, discomfort and intimidation. Common acts of cyberbullying include cyberstalking, threats to harm, harassment and impersonation.



Homophobic bullying

Homophobic bullying is deliberate and intentional inappropriate behaviour or comments directed towards an individual that identifies as part of LGBTQIA – lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual. Homophobia can occur in various forms, however, the most commonly practiced and experienced form of homophobic bullying is verbal, such as teasing, name-calling, spreading rumours, social isolation and making suggestive remarks. Homophobic bullying can also include physical violence, threats and damage to personal belongings.



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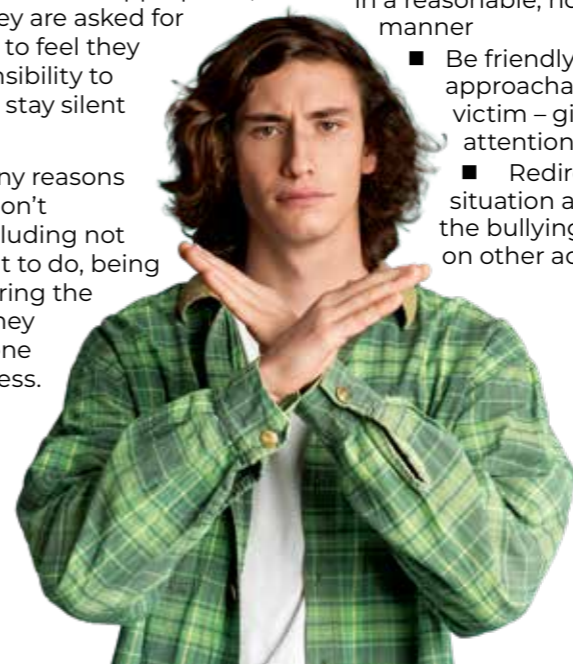
Being a bystander

You should never underestimate the power that you can have as one person – you could make a real difference in a victim's life by standing up to bullying.

The largest and most powerful group in a bullying situation is the bystander, although the majority of onlookers fail to stand up, support or assist the victim. Bullying can end in less than 10 seconds if a bystander intervenes.

Often in bullying situations, a bystander knows the behaviour is unacceptable and inappropriate, but unless they are asked for help or made to feel they have a responsibility to act, they may stay silent or walk away.

There are many reasons why people don't intervene, including not knowing what to do, being afraid or ignoring the situation as they believe it's none of their business.



Become an upstander

There are a number of ways you can become an upstander to bullying instead of a bystander. Preventing bullying is everyone's business; we all have a responsibility to act and put a stop to the behaviour. Here's how:

- Step in and tell the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable
- Report their behaviour to a teacher, parent, manager, employee, colleague, union or trusted adult
- Change the culture by standing up against the bully with others in a reasonable, non-aggressive manner
 - Be friendly and approachable to the victim – give them your attention and support
 - Redirect the situation away from the bullying by focusing on other activities

Are you the bully?

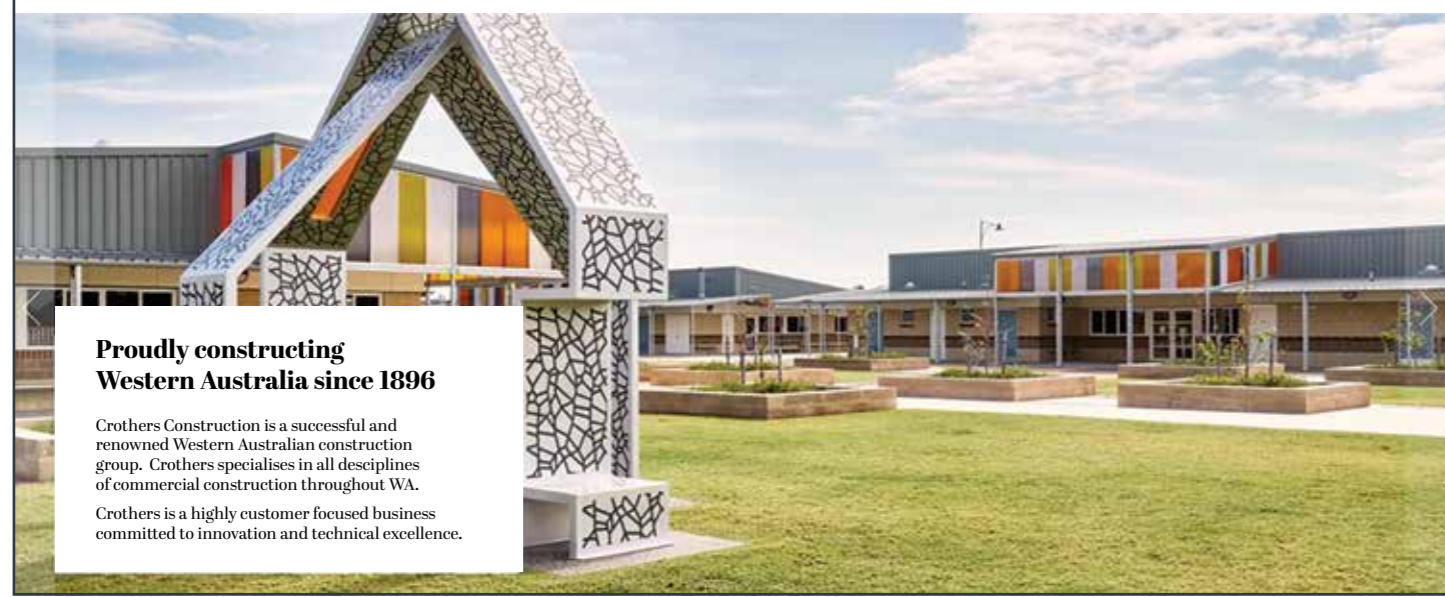
It is never too late to change your behaviour. Here are some steps to help you make a change to your behaviour today:

- Admitting that your behaviour is inappropriate and hurtful is important
- Think like a bullied individual – put yourself in the shoes of the victim and imagine how they would be feeling
- Take responsibility for your actions and thoughts – acknowledge that your actions and behaviour are not funny and can be damaging
- Talk to your friend or teacher or contact Bully Zero Australia Foundation about what is and isn't bullying or appropriate behaviour
- Stop and think – apologise to the victim and let them know you acknowledge your unacceptable behaviour and that it will not continue
- Talk openly to a trusted friend, teacher, colleague, adult or the Bully Zero Australia Foundation for advice, guidance and support

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Problems with mental health

There are many types of mental health problems that people may face during their lives.

Two of the most common mental health problems in young people are **anxiety** and **depression**. Let's look at the difference between these two mental health conditions.

Anxiety

What is it?

Anxiety is an unpleasant emotion many people feel when something might be risky, frightening or worrying. Experiencing mild anxiety is quite normal when facing a stressful situation, like just before a sporting match or exam.

How do I know what I'm feeling is not normal?

Anxiety can become a problem when feelings of being overwhelmed become very intense, happen regularly and interfere with your daily functioning to live a comfortable and happy life.

What symptoms should I look for?

Physical feelings of anxiety may include increased heart rate, faster breathing, muscle tension, sweating, shaking and 'butterflies in the stomach'.

Others include:

- Persistent worrying and excessive fears
- Being unable to relax
- Avoiding challenging situations
- Being socially isolated or withdrawn
- Trouble concentrating and paying attention
- Poor sleep
- Problems with school, social or family life



Depression

What is it?

Depression is one of the most common health issues for young people, characterised by feelings of sadness that last longer than usual, affect most parts of your life and stop you enjoying things that you used to.

How do I know what I'm feeling is not normal?

We can all feel sad, irritable or sensitive to what's happening around us from time to time.

This can make it harder to tell if you're experiencing 'normal' feelings or becoming depressed. If you feel like this most of the time for weeks at a time and have lost interest in activities you usually enjoy, you may need support.

What symptoms should I look for?

- Loss of interest in food or eating too much, leading to weight loss or gain
- Having trouble sleeping (getting to sleep and/or staying asleep), or oversleeping and staying in bed most of the day
- Feeling tired most of the time, or lacking energy and motivation
- Difficulty concentrating and making decisions
- Feeling worthless or guilty a lot of the time
- Feeling everything has become 'too hard'
- Having thoughts of death or suicide



When mental health goes downhill

Feeling down, tense, angry or anxious are all normal emotions, but when these feelings persist for long periods of time they may be part of a mental health problem.

Mental health problems can influence how you think, and your ability to function in your everyday activities at school, work or in relationships.

It can be helpful to talk to someone about what is going on in your life if you have noticed a change in how you are feeling and thinking. This might include:

- Feeling things have changed or aren't quite right
- Changes in the way that you carry out your day-to-day life
- Not enjoying, or not wanting to be involved in things that you would normally enjoy
- Changes in appetite or sleeping patterns
- Being easily irritated or having problems with friends and family for no reason
- Finding your performance at school is not as good as it used to be
- Being involved in risky behaviour that you would usually avoid
- Feeling sad or 'down' or crying for no apparent reason
- Having trouble concentrating or remembering things
- Having negative, distressing, bizarre or unusual thoughts
- Feeling unusually stressed or worried

Causes of mental health problems

A number of overlapping factors may increase your risk of developing a mental health problem. These can include:

- **Early life experiences:** abuse, neglect, or the loss of someone close to you
- **Individual factors:** level of self-esteem, coping skills and thinking styles
- **Current circumstances:** stress at school or work, money problems, difficult personal relationships, or problems with your family
- **Biological factors:** family history of mental health problems

For more information about anxiety, depression, other mental health problems and where to get support and help please visit beyondblue.org.au





Keeping mental health in check

Being mindful of how your mental health is tracking is a great exercise for everyone to do.

Monitoring and maintaining good mental health can be done by assessing your feelings, thoughts, and emotions. Record daily experiences in a journal. It is important to look out for signs that your friends may be struggling too. This next chapter may help with some tricky conversations.



If your friend is not okay

Getting help for a friend can take time and effort but it is worth it. As part of being a good and supportive friend there are times when we will need to check in with our friends to ensure that they are okay. Good help will assist your friend to deal with their problems and help them get on with life. If your friend tells you that they're not okay, you should:

- **Listen and try not to judge or 'fix things' straight away.** Taking the time to listen lets them know that you care and that their feelings are important. If someone has been going through a tough time, it can be a big relief to talk about what has been going on. Listening can be helpful; even without taking any actions, it might just be what they need. And don't panic, the fact that your friend sees something is wrong is a really important first step.
- **Let your friend know that they don't have to go through this on their own** and that you are there to help and support them.
- **Some people need time or space before they're willing to accept help.** Just giving them information about where to get help or providing them with fact sheets can be useful.
- **Suggest they read stories at [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au) about other young people who have made it through difficult times.** It may help reduce their feelings of being alone and give them hope for the future.
- **Be honest about why you are worried** and ask if anyone else knows about how they are feeling.
- **Encourage them to try some self-help strategies.** Things like eating well, exercising, writing feelings down, getting enough sleep, doing things they enjoy and avoiding alcohol and other drugs are just a few self-help tips that your friend could try.
- **Don't be too forceful in encouraging self-help activities.** It's important to understand that your friend may not feel able to use them because of how they are feeling, or they may not be enough to help them to feel better. If they're interested, you may be able to do some of the strategies with them, such as going for a walk or watching their favourite movie.
- **Encourage them to talk to a trusted adult** about what is going on and how they are feeling (e.g. a family member, teacher, sports coach).
- **Sometimes self-help strategies and/or talking to family and friends is not enough and that's okay.** There are a lot of professionals out there who can help. Suggest they make an appointment with their general practitioner (GP) or their nearest headspace centre if things don't begin to improve. You could offer to go with them if they need extra support.

If your friend doesn't want to get help

If you are still worried, continue to support them in a respectful way – try not to judge them or become frustrated. Let their family or another trusted adult know that you are worried. You have to strike the right balance between your friend's right to privacy and the need to make sure they are safe. If you decide to tell someone else, try to let your friend know first that you are planning on doing this. If you are worried that your friend needs urgent medical help or might hurt themselves or somebody else, you need to tell somebody immediately, even if they have asked you not to. This could be a parent, teacher or someone from a local health service.

What not to do or say

- Don't tell them to cheer up or get over it – this is not helpful.
- Don't encourage them to have a night out involving drugs or alcohol. Substance use is likely to make things worse.
- Don't make promises you can't keep – if your friend is at risk of harming themselves or somebody else, you need to seek immediate help, even if they ask you not to.

Self-care menu

Self-care is important for all of us.

Choose a menu item from each of the three sections below that you will do **TODAY** to ensure you're taking the very best care of YOU. Use this menu each day, change things up, try new things – and ensure your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing are a priority.



Physical Wellbeing

- Exercise
- Eat healthy food
- Drink lots of water
- Stretch
- Sleep
- Go for a walk
- Jump on a trampoline
- Dance
- Play with a pet
- Be in nature
- Care for a pot plant
- Hug someone
- Have a pamper day
- Do gardening
- Complete a home fitness circuit

Mental Wellbeing

- Schedule some technology-free time
- Learn something
- Practice gratitude
- Go outside
- Declutter/rearrange your bedroom
- Read something inspiring
- Write positive affirmations
- Create – draw/cook/make/build
- Set a goal
- Do some mindful mandala colouring
- Complete a puzzle
- Meditate

Emotional Wellbeing

- Take 5 deep breaths
- Play a board game
- Write in your diary or journal
- Tell someone a joke
- Listen to music
- Create a collage or mood board of your favourite things
- Connect with a friend or family member
- Re-read your favourite book
- Help someone
- Donate/volunteer
- Stargaze or cloud-gaze
- Write a bucket list
- Use positive self talk

Today's date:

Menu selection

Physical:

Mental:

Emotional:

Mood booster

Get grounded by using your five senses.

Choose one thing from each of the sections in the chart below to bring you comfort, joy, calm – and instantly shift your mood.



Hear

- music
- a friend's voice
- guided visualisation
- wildlife/birds out in nature
- podcast
- comedian
- motivational speaker on YouTube
- water fountain
- TED Talk



See

- funny movie
- candle gazing
- face-to-face conversation
- stargazing
- cloud watching
- memes
- cute animal pics
- watch funny cats
- sunset/sunrise
- inspirational quotes
- lava lamp



Touch

- pat a pet
- hot bath
- slime
- hug someone
- kinetic sand
- something cool
- fidget toy
- smooth pebble or crystal
- fluffy blanket
- gardening
- stress ball
- something warm
- Play-doh



Smell

- essential oil
- scented candle
- flowers
- home-baking
- fresh, morning air
- bath oil or body wash
- the ocean
- trees and grass
- your favourite meal



Taste

- peppermint tea
- something savoury
- something sweet
- favourite healthy snack
- yummy treat
- sparkling water
- warm, comforting drink
- something you made yourself

Courtesy of Bully Zero
bullyzero.org.au



growing good vibes

The mind and body benefits of planting a veggie patch.

In the fast-paced world of smartphones, social media, and endless notifications, taking a step back to reconnect with nature can do wonders for your overall well-being.

One way to achieve this is by planting your very own vegetable garden.

Beyond the delicious and nutritious produce, cultivating a veggie patch at home, at school or in a community garden can offer many mind and body health benefits.

From reducing stress and fostering mindfulness to providing nutritional rewards and building communities, the benefits of nurturing your own veggie patch are bountiful.

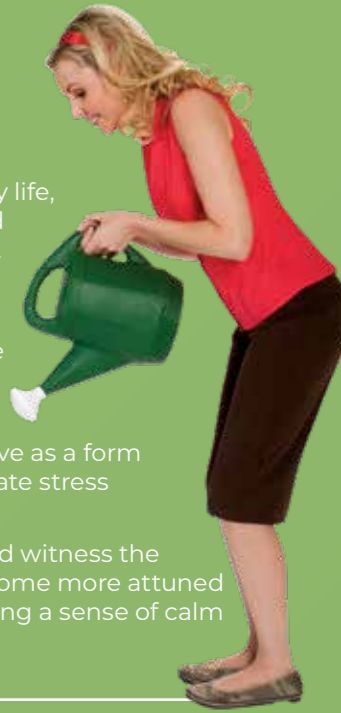
Mindful gardening

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, finding moments of peace and tranquillity can be challenging.

Planting and caring for a vegetable garden provide a perfect opportunity to practice mindfulness.

The rhythmic act of digging, planting, and watering can serve as a form of meditation, helping to alleviate stress and anxiety.

As you engage with the soil and witness the growth of your plants, you become more attuned to the present moment, fostering a sense of calm and mental clarity.



Stress reduction and mental wellbeing

Numerous studies have shown a strong link between gardening and stress reduction.

The physical activity involved in gardening releases endorphins, the body's natural mood enhancers, which can significantly improve mental well-being.

Additionally, the exposure to sunlight while tending to your garden promotes the production of vitamin D, known to play a crucial role in combating depression and boosting overall mood.



Connection with nature

Australia's diverse climate provides an ideal environment for a variety of vegetables to thrive.

By cultivating your own garden, you not only become more attuned to the seasonal changes but also gain a deeper appreciation for the natural world.

The connection with nature has been proven to reduce feelings of isolation and increase a sense of belonging – important aspects of mental health for young individuals navigating the challenges of adolescence and early adulthood.



Community building

Planting a vegetable garden can also be a communal activity, fostering connections with friends, family, and neighbours.

Whether you exchange gardening tips, share produce, or collaborate on a community garden project at school or in your neighbourhood, the sense of camaraderie that emerges contributes to a positive social environment.

Building these connections can act as a buffer against stress and contribute to a more robust support system for young individuals navigating the challenges of life.

Physical exercise

In an age dominated by sedentary activities, gardening offers a practical and enjoyable way to get moving.

Digging, planting, weeding, and harvesting involve a range of physical activities that contribute to improved flexibility, strength, and cardiovascular health.

The fresh air and physical exertion associated with gardening can serve as a welcome break from screen time, promoting a healthier lifestyle for the body.

Nutritional rewards

The benefits of a homegrown veggie patch extend beyond the mental and physical – they also nourish your body with fresh, organic produce.

Growing your own vegetables allows you to have control over the cultivation process, ensuring that your food is free from harmful pesticides and chemicals.

Consuming a diet rich in homegrown vegetables not only supports your physical health but can also positively impact your mental well-being by providing essential nutrients for brain function.



What to plant, when and where

Grab your gardening tools, embrace the therapeutic power of the soil, and embark on a journey to cultivate not just vegetables but a healthier and happier you.

Here's a guide to popular, easy to grow vegetables by Australian region.



Where do I start?

There are plenty of resources available online about building how to start a vegetable garden starting with the type of garden you want like a raised garden bed, wooden planters, a vertical garden, pots – whatever you have space and time for.

Here are some websites to start researching types of veggie gardens:

Better Homes and Gardens:
<https://www.bhg.com/gardening/vegetable/>

Aussie Gardener:
<https://aussiegardener.com.au/collections/veggie-growing-supplies>

Nutrition Australia:
<https://www.tryfor5.org.au/grow-your-own>

Cool Regions	Tasmania, Canberra and mountainous regions of NSW and Vic
Temperate Regions	Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth
Warm and Humid Regions	North Coast NSW, Brisbane and Sunshine Coast
Hot Regions	Northern Territory, Northern WA and Queensland

Vegetables and Herbs	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Basil												
Beans												
Beetroot & Silverbeet												
Broad Beans												
Broccoli & Cauliflower												
Cabbage												
Carrot												
Capsicum & Chillies												
Chives												
Celery/Celeriac												
Coriander												
Corn												
Cucumber												
Dill												
Eggplant												
Leek												
Lettuce												
Pak Choi												
Parsley												
Parsnip												
Peas												
Pumpkin & Squash												
Radish/Rocket												
Rockmelon & Watermelon												
Spinach (Winter)												
Spring Onion												
Strawberry												
Tomato												
Turnip												
Zucchini												

For more information visit: <https://www.mrfothergills.com.au/pages/post/seasonal-planting-guide>



This section provides information that will help you make good healthy choices, the importance of keeping active and getting enough sleep, and resources that will support you if you run into any challenges that are stopping you from maintaining a healthy body.

Healthy Body



Eat right

Eating healthy food is important at any age, but it's especially important for teenagers.

As your body is still growing, it's vital that you eat enough good quality food and the right kinds to meet your energy and nutrition needs.

Being a teenager can be fun, but it can also be difficult as your body shape changes. These physical changes can be hard to deal with if they aren't what you are expecting. There can be pressure from friends to be or look a certain way, and this might affect the foods you eat. It's not a good time to crash diet, as you won't get enough nutrients, and you may not reach your full potential. Following a sensible, well-balanced diet is a much better option, both for now and in the long-term.

As a teenager, you'll start to become more independent and make your own food choices. You'll hang out with your friends or get a part-time job so you can buy the things you like. Because you are still growing, you need to take extra care to get enough of some important vitamins and minerals to feel good and be healthy.



What should I eat?

Eating three regular meals a day with some snacks will help you meet your nutrition needs. Skipping meals means you will miss out on vitamins, minerals and carbohydrates, which can leave you lacking energy or finding it hard to concentrate. Here is a guide to help you understand the value of what you eat.

Breads, grains and cereals are carbohydrates that provide energy for your brain and muscles. They're also an excellent source of fibre and B vitamins. Without enough carbohydrates you may feel tired and run down. Try to include some carbohydrates at each mealtime.



Fruit and vegetables have lots of vitamins and minerals which help boost your immune system and keep you from getting sick. They're also very important for healthy skin and eyes. It's recommended you eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables a day.



Meat, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts and legumes (e.g. beans and lentils) are good sources of iron and protein. Iron is needed to make red blood cells, which carry oxygen around your body. Protein is needed for growth and to keep your muscles healthy. Fish is important for your brain, eyes and skin.



If you are vegetarian or vegan and do not eat meat, there are other ways to meet your iron needs, for example, with foods like baked beans, pulses, lentils, nuts and seeds.

Dairy foods like milk, cheese and yoghurt help to build bones and teeth and keep your heart, muscles and nerves working properly. You'll need three and a half serves of dairy food a day to meet your needs.



Eating too much fat and oil can result in you putting on weight. Try to use oils in small amounts for cooking or salad dressings. Other high-fat foods like chocolate, chips, cakes and fried foods can increase your weight without giving your body many nutrients.



Fluids are also an important part of your diet. Drink water to keep hydrated so you won't feel so tired or thirsty. It can also help to prevent constipation. It is better not to drink flavoured waters or sports drinks because they can lead to more weight gain.





Eating for study

When at school or studying, your brain needs extra energy. Eating healthy foods is also linked to better concentration. Here are some tips for eating healthier when studying and during exams.

- Eat small frequent meals.
- Easy and convenient nutritious meals include: frozen dinners, tinned soups, peanut-butter sandwiches, breakfast cereal, cheese sandwiches, tuna or chicken and salad sandwiches, baked beans or eggs on toast.
- Snack foods like chips and lollies can cause you to feel grumpy, irritable and low in energy. That's not what you want while you are studying. Try healthier snacks such as yoghurt, nuts, dried fruit, fresh fruit, plain popcorn or vegie sticks with dip.
- Eat only when you are hungry. Be aware of your hunger signals, like stomach pangs, grumbling guts, dry mouth etc. If you need a study break and do not have hunger pangs, have a drink of water or go for a walk.
- People use caffeine for a 'pick me up' to feel more awake or alert. Too much caffeine from coffee, tea, cola and energy drinks can disrupt your sleeping patterns, send your heart racing, make it difficult to focus and/or cause nervousness in some people. Try sticking to one or two cups of coffee or tea a day, or try decaffeinated coffee or herbal teas as an alternative. Enjoy cola or energy drinks only occasionally as they have too much sugar and little nutritional benefit.
- Drink plenty of water. When you are dehydrated you can feel tired.
- Regular exercise helps to improve your blood circulation, which keeps oxygen and nutrients flowing to your body and brain, helping you to concentrate.



Eating for sport and play

Eating good foods before exercise can boost stamina and endurance. The following foods will help:

- breakfast cereal with milk and fruit
- dried fruit and nuts
- yoghurt and fruit
- English muffin with peanut butter and honey
- banana and peanut butter sandwich
- low-fat muesli bar
- small muffins made with oats or wholemeal flour and fruit or vegetables
- low-fat custard and fruit
- raisin toast and cream cheese
- sushi hand rolls
- fruit scones
- trail mix with dried fruit, nuts, seeds and some choc chips
- fresh fruit smoothie with milk and/or yoghurt



Achieving a healthy weight

It is easy to grab biscuits, potato chips, cakes, sausage rolls, pies, doughnuts or chocolate bars when you're hungry, but regularly choosing those foods will make it easier to put on excess weight. Enjoy these kinds of convenience foods, takeaway and fried foods occasionally only.

Other things to avoid are drinks with lots of sugar, for example: fruit juice, cordial, soft drinks and energy drinks.



Preventing acne

No single food causes acne, but what you eat may influence acne. For some teenagers, foods like chocolate or greasy takeaways can have an effect on your skin. To prevent acne, try to eat fewer processed foods, and eat and drink healthily.





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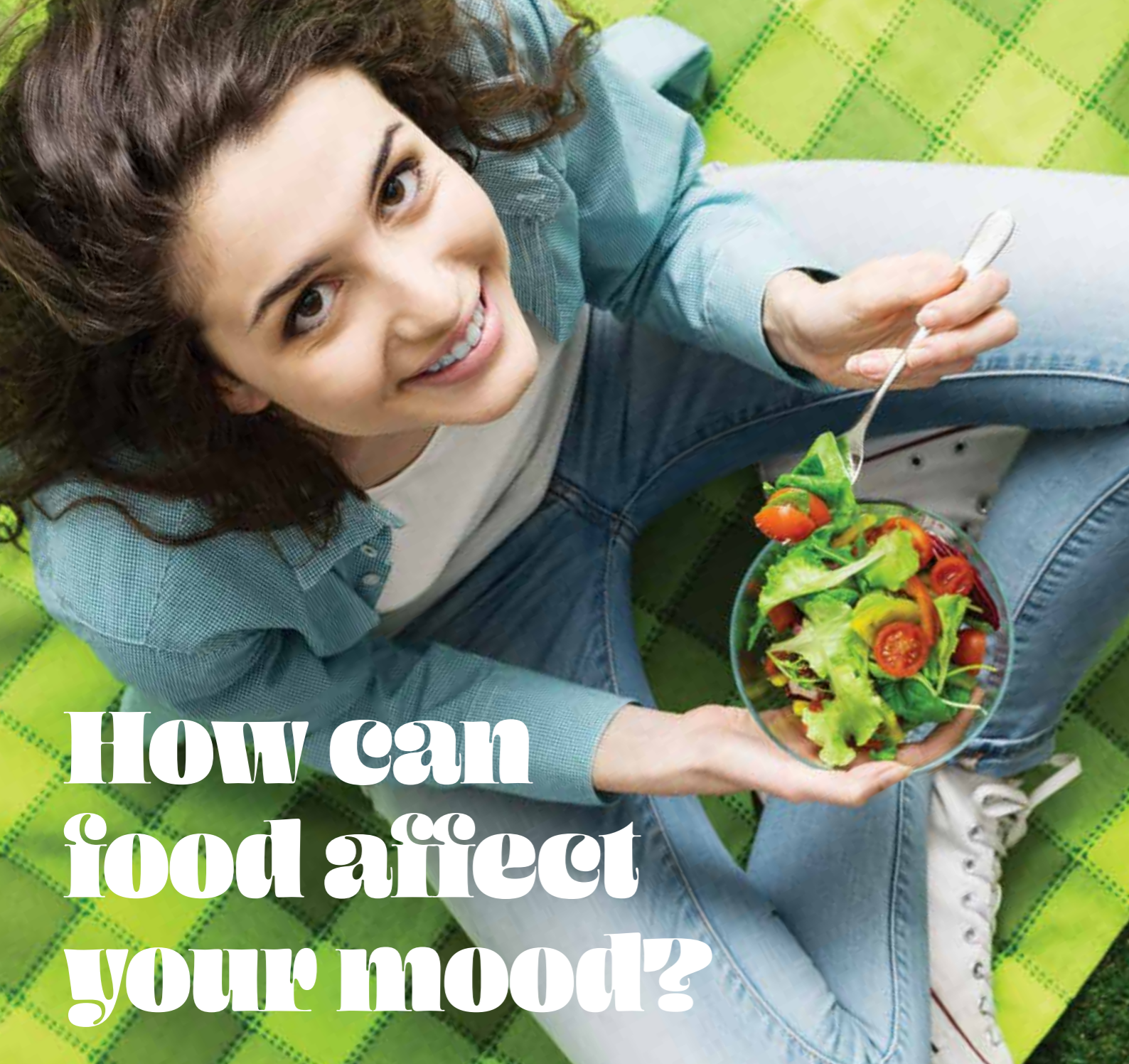
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Healthier alternatives to your usual snack foods

Swap this ...	For this ...
Chocolate bar 50 g	Low-fat chocolate milk drink 250 ml
Lollies	Dried fruit
Large coffee	Small coffee
Ice-cream	Low-fat frozen yoghurt or sorbet
High-sugar breakfast cereal	High-fibre cereal e.g. untoasted muesli
Hot chips	Baked potato
Large soft drink	Small soft drink, diet soft drink or water with lemon or lime
Chicken schnitzel	BBQ or roast chicken
Burger meal deal	Burger and water or small soft drink/diet drink
Doughnut	Fruit scone
Fried egg and bacon sandwich	Poached egg and ham in an English muffin



How can food affect your mood?

Did you know that your food choices can affect the way you feel? Energy slumps, feeling low and difficulty sleeping can all be the result of poor food choices.

Content for this section is courtesy of



For more information, visit nutritionaustralia.org

Improving your diet may help to:

- Improve your mood
- Give you more energy
- Help you think more clearly

Below are our top tips to boost your mood through food!

Choose the right carbohydrates

Our brain runs primarily on glucose which we get from eating carbohydrate rich foods. Severely restricting carbohydrates can make you feel grumpy and tired as the brain is no longer getting an adequate glucose supply.

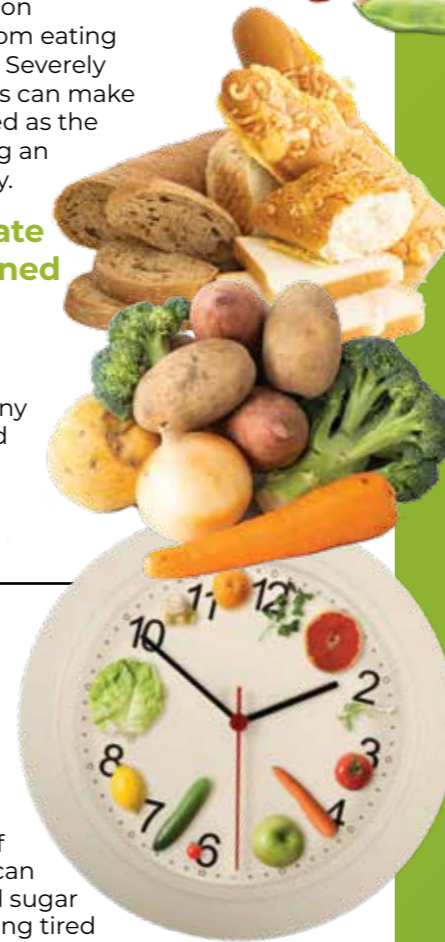
Better carbohydrate choices for sustained energy release:

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Wholegrains like grainy bread, brown rice and oats
- Sweet potatoes
- Milk and yoghurt

Timing is important

When you eat can have an effect on your mood:

- Going long periods of time without eating can cause a drop in blood sugar levels, leading to feeling tired and irritable
- Overeating to the point of feeling uncomfortable can make you feel tired and lethargic
- Eating moderate-sized meals on a consistent schedule will help maintain steady blood sugar levels and result in an even mood



Looking for inspiration to prepare a healthy lunch box, snack or meal?

Visit Nutrition Australia's great recipe section available at

nutritionaustralia.org/category/recipes/



Eat more plant foods

Plant foods include vegetables, legumes, fruits, grains and nuts and seeds. Many of these are high in fibre. The good bacteria in our large intestine helps manage our mood and stress levels. Eating foods high in fibre and drinking lots of water supports the good bacteria to help us feel happier.

Remember:

- Energy slumps, feeling low and difficulty sleeping can all be the result of poor food choices
- Choose slow-release carbohydrates for a sustained energy release
- Eat regularly to maintain blood glucose levels Eat more plant foods!

Eat protein-rich foods

Protein is essential to a good mood. Foods like fish, red meat, poultry, eggs and legumes contain amino acids. Tryptophan is an important amino acid that helps increase the amount of serotonin that is made in the brain. Serotonin is known as the 'happy hormone' as it promotes feelings of calm and relaxation, whilst defending against depression. So, add eggs to your breakfast, some lean chicken to a sandwich or salad at lunch and include some protein with dinner.



Omega 3s

- Researchers have noted that omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids may help protect against depression.
- Omega 3s are found in fatty fish, seafood, flaxseeds and walnuts.
- Try to aim for at least three 120 gram servings of oily fish like salmon or mackerel each week.
- If you struggle to reach this, discuss with your doctor whether fish oil supplements would be beneficial.



Watch the caffeine and alcohol

- Caffeine is a stimulant drug. Too much can keep you awake at night and cause difficulty concentrating.
- Alcohol is a depressant which means it slows down brain activity. Initially you may feel relaxed, but it can worsen symptoms of depression.
- Drinking alcohol close to bedtime can decrease the quality of your sleep causing you to wake feeling groggy rather than refreshed.



Probiotics

It turns out that the bacteria living in our digestive system plays a crucial role in reducing anxiety, depression and our perception of stress. There are hundreds of species of bacteria in our gut, and it's important to have more of the good kind of bacteria. Eating foods high in fibre, drinking plenty of water and getting more probiotics into your diet can keep your gut healthy and your mood stable. Foods like yoghurt, sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha and fermented vegies are all high in probiotics, but can contain high levels of sodium or salt, so should be enjoyed occasionally.

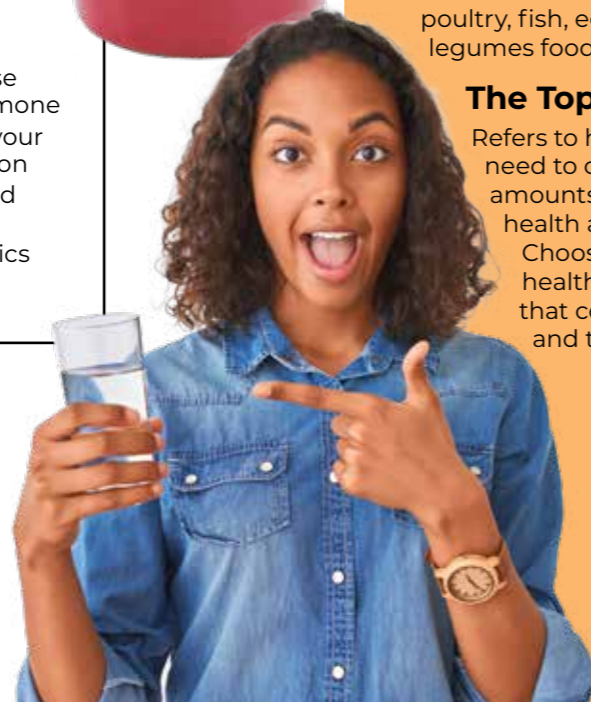


Remember:

- Add lean proteins to your diet to increase production of serotonin, the happy hormone
- Include oily fish and nuts and seeds in your diet for omega 3s to help fight depression
- Understand your limits with caffeine and alcohol as these can affect your mood
- Eat plenty of plant foods, rich in prebiotics to feed the probiotics in our gut
- Keep hydrated!

Hydration

Over 70 percent of our brain is made up of water, so it makes sense that being dehydrated is going to compromise how we are feeling. Aim to drink two litres of fluid a day – mainly from water – to avoid headaches, poor concentration and low mood.



Healthy Eating Pyramid

The Healthy Eating Pyramid encourages Australians to enjoy a variety of foods from every food group, every day.

It is a simple guide to the types and proportion of foods that anyone aged 1-70 should eat every day for good health.

It contains the five core food groups, plus healthy fats, according to how much they contribute to a balanced diet based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines (2013).

The Foundation layer

Includes the three plant-based food groups:

- vegetables and legumes
- fruits
- grains

The Middle layer

Includes the milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives, and the lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds and legumes food groups.

The Top layer

Refers to healthy fats that we need to consume in small amounts to support heart health and brain function. Choose foods that contain healthy fats instead of those that contain saturated fats and trans fats.

HEALTHY EATING PYRAMID



Enjoy a variety of food and be active every day!





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**Your individuality
is your superpower**

Celebrating the qualities that make everyone around you different can shift the focus from appearance to capability. Beauty goes beyond physical appearance. It includes kindness, resilience, intelligence, and compassion. Focus on developing and showcasing these qualities, and build a support system of friends and influencers who promote body positivity.

Tips to staying #bodypositive

Celebrate diversity:

Recognise that beauty comes in all shapes, sizes, and colours. Embrace and appreciate the uniqueness of yourself and others.



Social media detox:

Limit exposure to unrealistic beauty standards on social media. Follow accounts that promote body positivity and diversity.

Focus on health, not appearance:

Shift the focus from looks to overall well-being. Prioritise healthy habits like exercise, balanced nutrition, and sufficient sleep for how they make you feel, not just look.



Self-compliments:

Compliment yourself daily. Acknowledge your strengths, achievements, and unique qualities.



Surround yourself with positivity:

Choose friends and influencers who uplift and support you. Surrounding yourself with positive influences can contribute to a healthier self-image.



Challenge negative thoughts:

When negative thoughts arise, challenge them. Consider the evidence for and against these thoughts and reframe them in a positive light.



Participate in activities you enjoy:

Engage in activities that bring you joy and fulfilment. Focusing on your passions can help shift the focus away from appearance.



Wear what makes you feel confident:

Choose clothes that make you feel comfortable and confident, regardless of size or trends.

Speak up:

If someone makes negative comments about your body or others', don't be afraid to speak up. Encourage a culture of kindness and acceptance.



Positive affirmations:

Start and end your day with affirmations that focus on self-love and acceptance. Affirmations can shape a positive mindset.



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Let's get physical

Regular physical activity or exercise is not only fun but improves your health, helps you maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and cardiovascular disease. It is also really important to stay active during adolescence so that bone growth remains stimulated and the risk of thin or chalky bones (osteoporosis) is reduced in later years.



Increasing your activity

It can be hard to fit exercise into your day so try to see everyday activities as a good opportunity to be active.

A good goal is at least 60 minutes of exercise a day, which can be spread throughout the day.

Experts recommend young people do at least 60 minutes each day of moderate to vigorous physical activity that makes the heart beat faster.

You can do 60 minutes at once or doing a few activities during the day works too!

Incorporate some organised or informal activities that strengthen muscle and bone in your 60 minutes three times a week like:

- football
- basketball or netball
- bike or scooter riding
- swimming
- dancing

Muscle-strengthening activity

As part of your 60 minutes of daily activity, introduce some muscle and bone strengthening activities a few times a week too, like:

- running
- climbing
- swinging on monkey bars
- push-ups
- sit-ups
- lifting light weights
- yoga



Light physical activity

Just moving during the day will also help you stay fit and active like:

- walking to school
- walking the dog
- going to the park with friends
- helping around the house
- playing handball



Limiting time sitting

Long periods of sitting can reduce the benefits of being physically active, so try to break these up as often as possible.

By limiting the time you spend sitting or lying down – especially in front of screens – can help you grow while developing good habits for later life.



Did you know?

Screen time during childhood can have long-term impacts on your development?

A maximum of two hours of sedentary (sitting) recreational screen time is recommended per day. You'll be pleased to know that this does not include screen time needed for school work!

Work out with an app

7 Minute Workout: Fitness App

Stay fit and send stress packing by getting your sweat on.

The 7 Minute Workout App by Johnson & Johnson offers daily workouts designed to get your heart rate up and clear the mind.

You can spare seven minutes and you don't need any equipment, so do it in your bedroom, the lounge room, even outside ... it can be done anywhere, at any time!

The app also includes a health tracker to chart your progress and a custom workout builder, to pick and choose your favourite exercises.



Girls

MAKE YOUR MOVE

#girlsmakeyourmove

Girls Make Your Move

Studies show that young women are twice as likely as boys to be inactive and that they experience more barriers preventing them from being as physically active. Girls Make Your Move is an Australian Government campaign aimed at inspiring, energising and empowering young women to be more active regardless of ethnicity, size or ability. Ever thought about rollerblading, boxing, rock climbing or yoga? You can find activities such as these and more in your local area by visiting <https://campaigns.health.gov.au/girlsmove>. There are options available for all skill levels and interests. Don't forget to follow @girlsmakeyourmove on Facebook for daily tips and inspiration for getting active.





Sleeping well

Sleep is a really important part of our life. It helps us to feel well, focused and happy. Most people experience a bad night's sleep every now and again, but if you regularly don't get enough sleep it can really affect how you feel and what you can get done during the day.

How much sleep do I need?

Everyone is different, and the amount of sleep you need might be different to what your friends need. Generally speaking:

- People aged 14 to 17 need between 8 and 10 hours each night
- People aged 18 to 25 need between 7 and 9 hours each night

Why is sleep important?

Good sleep habits can improve mood, concentration and performance at school or work. They may also help control overeating and help prevent obesity. Lack of sleep is linked to symptoms of depression such as feeling down, hopeless, irritable, having thoughts of suicide and using alcohol or other drugs.

What gets in the way of a good night's sleep?

For young people, not getting enough sleep might be caused by:

- Biological factors, such as puberty or changes in your body clock
- Environmental factors, such as social pressure, school or university workload, use of electronic devices, or using alcohol or other drugs


Content for this section is courtesy of




For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre or for online and telephone support, visit [headspace.org.au](https://www.headspace.org.au)

Tips for a good night's sleep


If you're having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep, here are a few things you can try:




Aim to get to bed and wake up around the same time each day, including on the weekend. This helps your body to get into a routine. Try not to take naps in the day as this affects your body's routine.




Turn off your screens (phone, TV and laptop) at least 30 minutes before bedtime. The light from screens can stop your brain producing the sleep chemical melatonin, which is important in helping you get to sleep.





Try not to worry about having a bad sleep. A lot of people underestimate how much sleep they get, so you might find it useful to use a sleep app to see how much sleep you're getting. However, if you find that this makes you focus on how much sleep you're not getting, you may be better off without it.



Natural sleep cycles are based on your body clock, which is mainly set by when you're exposed to light. Light is needed in the morning, so aim to be outside for 30 minutes, sit by a bright window or use a specially designed artificial light source. In the evening, your body needs less stimulation, so try dimming the lights.




Try to limit how much caffeine you have, including coffee, energy drinks and soft drinks. Also, try to avoid caffeine entirely after lunchtime.





Avoid drinking alcohol before bed. It might make you sleepy, but you're less likely to get a good, restful sleep with alcohol in your system.

Avoid smoking before bed. Discuss ways to quit smoking, as well as any other problems with drugs or alcohol with your GP.



Exercising during the day is a good way to make you tired at night. This might mean going to the gym, walking around the block at lunchtime or playing sport. Try to avoid exercising last thing at night though, as this can keep you awake.



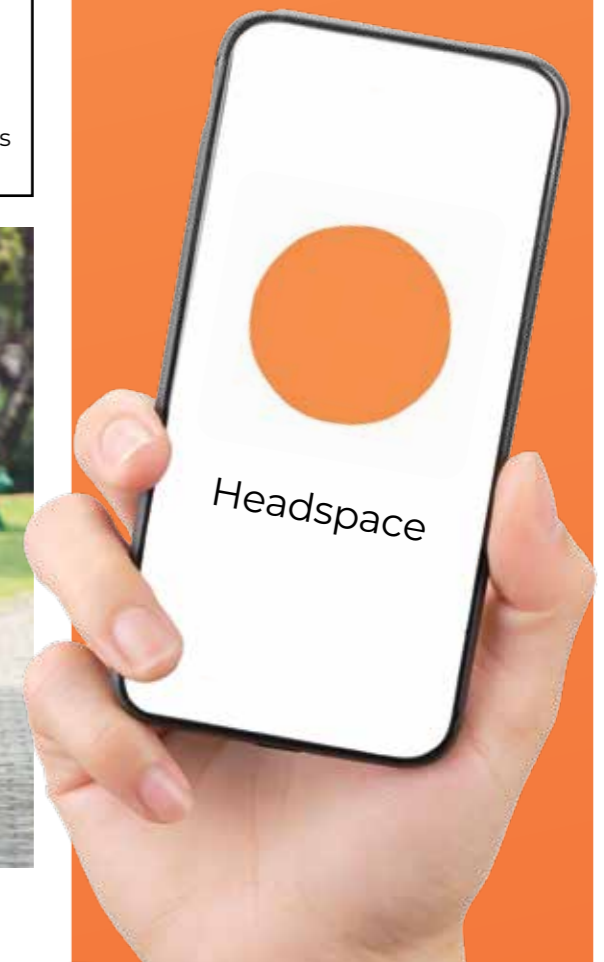
Sleep medications are not usually required to help with sleep problems. While they can help in the short-term, they also have a number of side effects and may not give good quality sleep. Your body can also get used to these medications quickly so the effect wears off.

It's best to try and keep your bed for sleep. Working, watching TV or being online in bed can cause your brain to associate it with being alert and awake.

Kick back with an app

Headspace

Headspace is known as a popular guided meditation app, but it's also great for sleep. We particularly enjoy its "sleepcasts," which are 45- to 55-minute-long audio experiences (kind of like adult bedtime stories) that help you visualize calming experiences, like a slow moving train or a walk through a garden. Headspace offers new stories every night, so you'll never get bored.



Support services

These organisations provide information for young people and their parents and carers who may need support. They provide excellent resources, stories from people with lived experience, and information to guide better mental health in young people. Some also offer counselling and direct services.



☎ 13 92 76
 🌐 www.13yarn.org.au

Confidential one-on-one yarning opportunity for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. Speak with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter.



☎ 1300 22 4636
 🌐 beyondblue.org.au

Beyond Blue provides information and support to help everyone in Australia achieve their best possible mental health, whatever their age and wherever they live.



🌐 bullyingnoway.gov.au

This website provides information, resources and support services for young children, students, parents and teachers on a range of bullying issues and related matters.



☎ 1800 33 4673
 🌐 butterfly.org.au

If you are suffering from an eating disorder, or suspect one of your friends might be, find out more and get support from the Butterfly Foundation.



☎ 1800 650 890
 🌐 eheadspace.org.au

headspace is the National Youth Mental Health Foundation. They began in 2006, and ever since have provided early intervention mental health services to 12-25-year-olds.



☎ 1800 55 1800
 🌐 kidshelpline.com.au

Kids Helpline is Australia's only free, confidential 24/7 online and phone counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25. Qualified counsellors at Kids Helpline are available via WebChat, phone or email anytime and for any reason.



☎ 13 11 14
 🌐 lifeline.org.au

Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services. They are committed to empowering Australians to be suicide-safe.



☎ 1800 953 390
 🌐 lifestart.org.au

Lifeline supports young people living with a disability. It also helps communities to become more inclusive. This organisation is a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme provider offering flexible, person-centred support.



🌐 myan.org.au

Multicultural Youth Advisory Network engages young people from around Australia from refugee and migrant backgrounds. Find out more about its work including the National Youth Ambassadors Network by visiting myan.org.au where you can be connected to your local state body.



☎ 1800 184 527
 🌐 qlife.org.au

QLife provides anonymous and free LGBTIQ+ peer support and referral for people in Australia wanting to talk about sexuality, identify, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.



🌐 raisingchildren.net.au

This website is designed for Australian parents, teachers and carers. It provides up-to-date, evidence-based, scientifically validated information about raising children up to 18 years and tips for parents and carers to look after themselves.



🌐 reachout.com

You can also join a ReachOut Online Community forum that is free, anonymous and available 24/7 for people aged 14-25 in Australia.



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www.defence.gov.au/uxo

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