

When the cowpat hits the windmill

A guide to staying mentally fit.



Written by students, for students.

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The *beyondblue* Support Service provides advice and support.

Contact the Support Service on 1300 22 4636, or email or chat online at www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport.

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National Rural Health Student Network

The National Rural Health Student Network (NRHSN) represents the future of rural health in Australia. It has more than 9,000 members who belong to 28 university Rural Health Clubs from all states and territories.

It is Australia's only multidisciplinary student health network, bringing together people studying medicine, nursing and allied health, encouraging them to pursue careers in the bush.

The NRHSN has two aims:

- to provide a voice for students who are interested in improving health outcomes for rural and remote Australians
- to promote rural health careers to students and encourage students who are interested in practising in rural health care.

The NRHSN and its Rural Health Clubs offer rural experience weekends, career information sessions and professional development activities as well as providing a social base for students at university and when on rural placement.

The student network leaders also advocate on behalf of health students of all disciplines - including opportunities for more rural placements and training support.

The NRHSN is managed by Rural Health Workforce Australia (RHWA) with funding from the Federal Department of Health.

www.nrhsn.org.au



Rural Health Clubs around Australia

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. ARMS | Australian National University, ACT |
| 2. AURHA | Adelaide University, SA |
| 3. BREAATHHE | University of Newcastle, NSW |
| 4. BUSHFIRE | Bond University, QLD |
| 5. CARAH | Charles Darwin University, NT in assoc. with Flinders University, SA |
| 6. CRANC | University of Canberra, ACT |
| 7. FURHS | Flinders University, SA |
| 8. HOPE4HEALTH | Griffith University, QLD |
| 9. KRAISH | Notre Dame University, Broome, WA |
| 10. LARHC | La Trobe University, Bendigo, VIC |
| 11. MARHS | Charles Sturt University, Albury, NSW, including La Trobe University Wodonga, VIC |
| 12. MIRAGE | University of Sydney, NSW |
| 13. NERCHA | University of New England, NSW |
| 14. NOMAD | Deakin University, VIC |

the future of rural health



- 15. OUTLOOK** University of Melbourne, VIC
- 16. RAHMS** University of New South Wales, NSW
- 17. RHINO** James Cook University, QLD
- 18. RHUUPS** University of Western Sydney, NSW
- 19. ROUNDS** Notre Dame University, Sydney, NSW
- 20. ROUSTAH** University of South Australia, SA
- 21. RUSTICA** University of Tasmania, TAS
- 22. SHARP** University of Wollongong, NSW
- 23. SPINRPHEX** Combined Universities of Western Australia, WA
- 24. StARRH** Charles Darwin University, NT, including Flinders University, NT
- 25. TROHPIQ** University of Queensland, QLD
- 26. WAALHIIBE** Combined Universities of Western Australia, WA
- 27. WARRIAHS** Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW
- 28. WILDFIRE** Monash University, VIC

Looking after your mental health and wellbeing is always important...



...especially when you are in a new environment or facing new challenges. What can you do to stay on top of things? Are there some steps you can take? This guide can help you with some useful tips and information.

Why 'When the Cowpat Hits the Windmill'?

Living in rural or remote areas can present challenges, but it shouldn't limit your ability to enjoy and get the most out of your life.*

You won't find many people in the country throwing cowpats at windmills. But if you do see dung being flung at a windmill – take cover, because somebody is not happy! Before you get to the stage where you feel like throwing cowpats or anything else at a windmill, remember this book!

**Living in a rural or remote area. Online article.*

Sourced from <http://au.reachout.com/Living-in-a-rural-or-remote-area>.



Section 1

Keeping track of your mental health: look, listen and act



Do you know the signs to look out for that might indicate your mental health is not as good as it could be?

You might notice that you:

- withdraw from your normal activities or don't enjoy them as much as you did before
- find it an effort to keep up with your normal activities and relationships
- find university, placements or work more difficult than usual
- start thinking bad thoughts about yourself, such as you are a failure or worthless
- worry about what other people think, or feel hopeless about the future
- find it difficult to make decisions or can't concentrate
- have some problems with your close relationships or find yourself being irritable
- keep worrying about the little things

- don't want to meet up with friends
- start having physical health problems, such as headaches, churning gut, tiredness, appetite change, infections or muscle pains
- have ideas that you can't get out of your head
- find it difficult to sleep or sleep more than usual.

Noticing changes in others

It's important to keep your eyes open and be aware of what you and your friends are normally like. Keep up with what is happening in other people's lives and talk to people you are close to. Listen to people. What they don't say can be just as important as what they do say.

The *beyondblue* anxiety and depression checklist (K10) is a useful resource for you, your mates and colleagues and can be found at:



www.beyondblue.org.au/checklist



Section 2

Ways to maintain good mental health

All is going well. You like your new town; you've made new friends and you impress your new workmates with your polished clinical skills. To help you stay on top of the world, make the most of your placement and maintain optimal mental wellbeing, consider the following:

Relaxation

Take the time to relax and try at least one of the following exercises. Find a comfortable and quiet place to sit where you won't be interrupted.

Abdominal breathing exercise

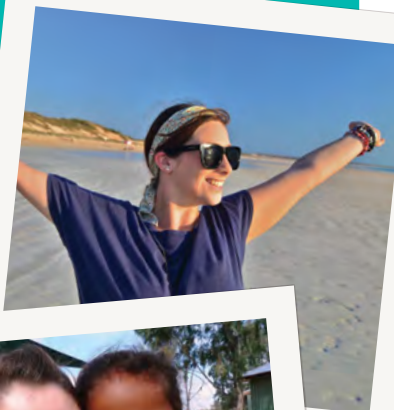
When you are stressed, monitoring your breathing enables you to slow and deepen your breaths, which helps reduce the feeling of tension.

Learning to change your breathing to a more relaxed pattern is a simple, yet effective skill.

1. Place one hand over your navel.
2. Take a deep breath and blow it out completely through your mouth like a sigh.
3. Allow your next breath to flow in by itself through your nose.
Note: Your hand on your stomach should rise or move upward.
4. Keep breathing through your nose and breathe in slowly for three seconds, then out for three seconds, and then repeat these slow breaths for at least a minute.

Muscle relaxation exercise

1. Sit or recline comfortably with your eyes closed.
2. Tense up one set of muscles e.g. arms or legs.
3. Now let them go limp. If you do this effectively, the contrast between tensed and relaxed should show you what relaxed feels like – you want to remember that feeling.
4. Move on to another set of muscles e.g. back, stomach or face.
5. Now let them go limp. Notice the relaxed feeling. Try to hang on to it.
6. Repeat for all muscle groups.



The world's your oyster! Go for it.

Word repetition relaxation exercise

1. Sit or recline comfortably with your eyes closed.
2. Deeply relax all of your muscles, beginning with your feet and progressing up to your face.
3. Breathe through your nose and become aware of your breathing.
4. As you breathe out say the word 'ONE' silently to yourself. For example, breathe in ... then out ... saying the word 'ONE', breathe in ... then out ... saying the word 'ONE', and so on. Breathe easily and naturally. The repetition of 'ONE' helps to break the train of distracting thoughts.
5. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes.
6. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, at first with your eyes closed, and then with your eyes open.

Visualisation exercise

1. Sit or recline comfortably with your eyes closed.
2. Use one of the above exercises to relax yourself.
3. When you are very relaxed, visualise yourself in a favourite place where you feel relaxed, peaceful, safe and tranquil.
4. Imagine the sounds you can hear, the fragrances you can smell, how it feels to be there and the relaxed body sensations.
5. For a couple of minutes just stay in that peaceful place enjoying these sensations.
6. Imagine how you look while you're there, feeling peaceful.
7. Allow your mind to come back to the room you're in.
8. Move and stretch a little.
9. Open your eyes and feel alert and refreshed.

Meditation

Most people have experienced a meditative state. This is the feeling you get when you are totally absorbed in an activity, a losing of awareness of yourself, of time and place.

A sense of being 'at one' with what you are doing.

Meditation can enhance your calmness and can help 'centre' and relax you. It may enable you to be more aware of yourself, your needs and motivation and the needs and motivation of others. It can bring increased clarity and calmness to your everyday life. It can also help your body to repair itself from the impact of stress and allow you to recharge your batteries, physically and mentally.

Find activities that can bring about a meditative state for you and ensure that they are included in your regular routine. The benefits of meditation may not be immediately apparent and regular meditation may be necessary before you reap benefits.

A simple meditation technique is to sit comfortably in a quiet place. Close your eyes or have them slightly open while you become aware of your breathing – simply watch your breath go in and out. It may be helpful to count your 'out' breath up to 10. You will probably be distracted by thoughts popping into your mind. Just return to your counting and let the distraction pass. If you meditate regularly, the constant chatter in your mind decreases and you will feel calmer and more relaxed. Repeat the exercise for 10 minutes at a time, twice a day.

The benefits of meditation may not be immediately apparent and regular meditation may be necessary before you reap benefits.

Wellbeing

Alcohol and drug use

You will find people overusing and abusing alcohol and other drugs in all settings.

beyondblue's Fact Sheet 9 Reducing alcohol and other drugs is a good resource containing information on the effects of alcohol, cigarettes and illicit drugs, along with advice on how to manage problems with drug use.



beyondblue's resources are available www.beyondblue.org.au/resources



or by calling the *beyondblue* Support Service on 1300 22 4636 (local call).

Eating well

It's easy to get into bad eating habits via skipping meals and not maintaining a balanced diet. You are a health professional in the making and you will be advising others on good eating. So listen to your own advice and walk the walk. Exercise and diet make great partners for surviving life's challenges.

Exercise

Regular exercise and a nutritious diet contribute to a strong and healthy body that will be better able to withstand the wear and tear of short- and long-term stress responses. Exercise 'burns off' the physical energy created by stress, helping to prevent a slow drift towards a chronically stressed state.

Exercise can also be useful as a circuit breaker at the end of the day. It can help put a boundary between work and home and provide time for reflection or an escape from the daily grind. Not only that, but getting involved in local sporting competitions is a great way to get to know people and build up a social support network in your new town.

If 'time out' is what you're after, consider joining the local gym or just going for a walk around the town.

Journal writing

Keeping a journal can be useful in helping you reflect on your experiences, keep track of your progress and set goals for your placement (and beyond).

Use your journal to undertake critical reflection of your experiences:

1. Recall the event. Don't include any judgements, but instead focus on what actually happened, not what could have happened.
2. Reframe your experience, looking for and exploring positive feelings. Negative emotions, such as anger and fear, can block the reality of the situation and make it difficult to see other ways of looking at the whole view.
3. Analyse the issues. Would you do anything differently if a similar event occurred again? Are there any old practices or attitudes that need to be replaced with better ways of doing things in the future?
4. Use your journal to record your goals. Make sure they are in line with your priorities and are realistic and achievable.

Personal identity

We are all individuals with different personal attributes and backgrounds. Along with different personal identities, everyone has different levels of need in how they can acknowledge or communicate with people similar to them. Whatever your personal identity, links may be able to be formed by researching what local community groups exist in the area you will be visiting (e.g. places of worship, social events, cultural centres).

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students may benefit from connecting with Elders or community members in the town they are placed. Culturally and linguistically diverse students may benefit from connections and support from individuals/families of the same cultural background. Religious/spiritual needs may be fulfilled by attending places of worship.





Further information about personal identity can be found at:



au.reachout.com/Wellbeing/Personal-Identity

Sleeping well

Having a good night's sleep is important for maintaining good health. You can get valuable information from *beyondblue's* Staying well booklet. It's not rocket science and your body will thank you.



beyondblue's resources are available www.beyondblue.org.au/resources



or by calling the *beyondblue* Support Service on 1300 22 4636 (local call).

Social support network

Establishing and maintaining a good social support network is essential for long-term wellbeing. Social support can come from inside or outside the local community. These relationships can provide opportunities to confide painful feelings and help buffer all types of stress.

It's important to accept the support of others to avoid jeopardising your wellbeing. Debriefing with other students, workmates and friends back home will help you manage stress. Setting aside time to do this regularly will help you maintain a balanced lifestyle and avoid burn-out.

Looking after yourself includes looking out for friends who may also be on rural placements and finding it a challenge. Make a deal with your friends that you will check up on each other with some regularity. Will you be courageous and speak up if you think a friend is doing it tough? Will your friends feel comfortable voicing any concerns they may have about you? This might be something you could all negotiate.



Time management

Are you completely satisfied with how you use your time or do you think you could use your time more efficiently? Consider the following strategies:

- List all the things you want to get done. Separate the tasks into what **MUST** be done and what you **WANT** to get done. Then list what **MUST** be done in order of priority. Work through the **MUST** list first, one point at a time.
- Another way of drawing up this list of priorities is to put tasks into **MUST DO**, **GOOD TO DO** and **NICE TO DO**. This is a simple way of working out tasks that are urgent and important, urgent but not important, important but not urgent and not urgent or important. The tasks that don't make it to the **MUST DO** list may need to be shared: something to talk to your supervisor about.
- Identify the activities you would like to spend more time doing and the activities you would like to spend less time doing. List some short but realistic steps you could take now to find more time to start achieving these goals.
- Set some goals for yourself for the upcoming year. Think about how you can spend your time now in order to achieve these goals. What obstacles might be in the way? Can you manage them by yourself?
- When planning your time, space out rewarding and non-rewarding tasks. This will help you keep motivated during tasks that are less satisfying.
- Probably one of the most important time management strategies is learning to say 'no'. Learning what not to do is as important as knowing what to do. Over-commitment is a sure road to exhaustion.
- Part of effective time management is making sure you have time to relax, reflect and re-orientate yourself. Take the time to lie down, read or meditate. Make it part of your routine. This can deactivate the stress response for a while.





Section 3

Troubleshooting

Things aren't going to plan. Feeling down? Stressed? Frustrated? Maybe moving to your placement has left you feeling lonely, isolated or confused?

Some of the following ideas might help you through these problems.

Feeling stressed? Problem-solving Strategy 1

Identify sources of stress

Make a list of all the things in your life causing you stress or problems. Rank them in order of impact on your life. Categorise each one as requiring 'immediate action', 'future action' or 'ignore/adapt to' (see the Time management strategies).

If your list is too long or intimidating, address the easier ones first. Some issues may need to be put on the back burner in order to give you time to examine the problem and decide on the best course of action.

Analyse the problem

Write the problem on a piece of paper. Draw two circles around it – a large outer circle and a smaller inner circle.

The large outer circle is your Circle of Concern. Note down the elements of the problems that are beyond your control.

These are elements that you will have to come to terms with without letting them erode your peace of mind.

The smaller circle is your Circle of Influence.

Within the smaller circle, note down the elements of the problem that you have some power to influence or change in some way. These are the elements that you can start to do something about.

During the process of addressing the issues in the smaller circle, you may find that some of the elements in the larger outer circle come under your control. By the same token, you may find issues you thought you could address are not really within your control.



Have a good laugh! Always a winner

Problem-solving Strategy 2

Identify the problem and condense it to one word or sentence. Think up as many possible options to solve the problem as you can. Weigh up the good and bad points about each option. Consider the consequences of each option. Decide which one is best and commit yourself to carrying out this option.

Once you have decided on a course of action, it may help to break it down into several smaller steps. Work through the plan one step at a time.

If it doesn't work, consider the outcomes of the first solution and consider alternative options. Then try again.

If nothing works, you may need to accept that you cannot change the situation. Sometimes this is simply the case. So consider strategies that would help you live with the situation as it is. This may mean implementing practical strategies to protect your wellbeing in the face of the stressor, changing your attitude to the stressor or implementing good self-care strategies.



Problem-solving Strategy 3

Begin with the end in mind. Identify your desired outcome. Imagine your situation could magically change. What would the situation look like once the problem had been solved? What changes can you make to bring that about? With a clear goal in mind, you can make a plan and hopefully bring your desired outcome into a reality.

Feeling down?

Changing the way you think and feel about a situation will influence how you feel and behave in response to it. By changing how you think, you can change how you feel about a particular situation. Try some of the strategies below.

- Try to think positive thoughts. Look for and notice any positive attributes, no matter how small, in any given situation.
- Be as fair to yourself as you would be to others. Imagine a good friend is describing the situation that you are experiencing and imagine what advice you would give them. Follow your own advice.
- Imagine you are several years into the future. How much will it really matter then?
- Confront your fear. Exaggerate the situation. Paint a worst-case scenario – what's the worst thing that can happen? How likely is it?
- Eliminate 'should' statements from your thinking and replace these with 'could', 'want to' or 'choose to'. Directing 'shoulds' at yourself means you are trying to motivate yourself with guilt and punishment rather than moving towards positive outcomes. Directing 'shoulds' at others often leads to feelings of anger, frustration and resentment if they don't comply.
- Don't let negative thoughts get out of control. If you notice yourself constantly painting worst-case scenarios and interpreting situations in a negative manner, say to yourself – 'STOP!' Pause and then take a fresh and more balanced look at the situation.

- Analyse the 'self-talk' that may lead to you feeling more stressed about a situation. Change the 'self-talk' to a more positive interpretation. For example, instead of thinking 'This person drives me nuts', try replacing it with 'I can cope with this person' and notice the difference in the way you feel in response.
- If you have a particular worry that keeps popping into your mind, make a plan to allocate some 'worry time' to it each day. Schedule this, say for half an hour in the evening. Put off worrying about whatever it is until you sit down to have your 'worry time'. This will allow you to concentrate on the tasks at hand and minimise the amount of worry in your day.
- Assess your strengths and weaknesses. Accept yourself as you are, warts and all. No one is perfect or without human frailties. (In fact, they would be scary to be around if they were!)
- Keep a 'Journal of Gratitude'. Note down pleasant moments or experiences in your day. This might be as simple as the way the morning light falls in your kitchen or the smell of being in the country. Although a simple strategy, it can have a powerful, positive effect on your perceptions, how you feel, what you notice and the amount of pleasure you experience during each day.
- Don't struggle to control situations that are beyond your control. Sometimes the best thing to do is to 'let go' and accept 'what is' rather than 'what you would like it to be'. Let go of your expectations. Go with the flow.
- At the end of the day, take 10 minutes to acknowledge what you have achieved and give yourself credit for it. Don't waste time feeling guilty about what you could not do.
- Try to discipline yourself to work during work time and allow yourself to relax at the end of each day.
- Above all, get in a good laugh at least once a day.

Angry?

It's possible to learn to cope with anger and frustration.

Before you get angry

- Remember you are responsible for your own feelings. No one can make you feel anything that you don't want to feel.
- Identify those events and behaviours that can trigger your anger.
- Avoid 'setting yourself up' to get angry.
- Develop coping strategies to defuse your anger reactions before you lash out at others. Counting to 10 is a cliché AND it works. Take a few deep breaths. Leave the situation if you don't need to be there.

In the longer term, you can go off alone to cool down, get stuck into some exercise and use relaxation techniques.

When you feel anger coming up

- Acknowledge the anger, but do not indulge the emotion.
- Use the coping strategies you have developed to defuse the anger and cool off a bit.
- Think about the situation. Is there anything you need to do? Is there a threat to your wellbeing that needs to be addressed? Was the anger just a result of your overall stress?
- Try to achieve a calm state of mind before working out a plan to deal with the problem.
- Do not allow your anger to build on itself. Challenge any negative thoughts that may be fuelling your anger. Distractions e.g. watching TV or reading can help prevent a negative train of thought from escalating.
- Plan to deal with the problem constructively. Begin with the desired outcome in mind.
- Use your troubleshooting strategies.





Maintaining a balanced lifestyle – Keeping the wheel turning

Maintaining a balanced lifestyle is important for long-term wellbeing. The following strategy may help you to monitor where you are putting your time and energy and how well the different parts of your life are going. This exercise can be used regularly to appraise what is happening in your life, what is good about it and what could be better.

1. Draw the spokes of a wheel.
2. Label each spoke with an important part of your life e.g. one spoke for family, one for work, one for hobbies, one for study, one for connection to culture.
3. Give each spoke a mark out of ten depending on how well that part of your life is going – ten being the best, one being the worst. Mark a dot on the spoke to indicate this score e.g. right at the centre of the wheel for one, right on the periphery for ten.
4. Join the dots together and assess how round the wheel looks.
5. The aim is to have the wheel as round as possible. A round wheel will indicate a holistic and broad base to your wellbeing. You look like you're ready to roll!
6. If you are allocating all your energy to only one or two areas of your life then the wheel (and your life!) will be off balance. This exercise may show areas of your life are being neglected and need attention.

If you are allocating all your energy to only one or two areas of your life then the wheel (and your life!) will be off balance.

When a cowpat flies – Coping with difficult or traumatic events

To help cope with the aftermath of a traumatic event, arrange some time out and talk with your support network about the event and your reactions. Friends, family, peers, mentors and supervisors are all good choices. Sometimes it may be difficult to find someone to talk to because of the lack of anonymity in rural locations or you may wish to speak to someone outside your social network.



In these cases, resources such as Bush Crisis Line 1800 805 391 (24-hour Freecall) may be useful.

Further resources are available at the end of this guide in Section 8.

Feeling isolated?

Working and studying alone can leave you without some of your familiar support networks. Opportunities to get reassurance from others experiencing similar situations may be limited in some placement locations.

A sense of isolation may be reduced by working with a mentor, networking with local and regional health organisations and networking with other students on rural placements. If you're not sure where to look to find these contacts, your Rural Health Club is a great place to start.

Also, when you're on placement, make sure your university is aware of any issues due to isolation. They may be able to help you find others in similar situations and provide important assistance with issues associated with your placement, such as housing or telephone access.

Keeping safe

When on a rural placement, it is important to consider your personal safety, just as you would anywhere. Use the tips below as a starting point to consider other issues that may arise.

- Make an informal risk assessment for yourself, considering issues such as transport, accommodation (including the availability of a phone) and supervision.
- Don't walk around the town or community by yourself at night in unlit or isolated areas.
- Ask a local mentor about the places that should be avoided in the community for cultural or safety reasons.
- Observe the local customs in terms of culturally appropriate dress.
- Lock your accommodation at night or when you aren't there during the day.
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back, even by SMS to a friend.
- Ensure that you have the appropriate driving skills if driving over unsealed roads and tell someone if you do not feel confident.
- When beginning your placement, ask about safety procedures, personal alarms and the location of a safe room in the event of an aggressive patient.
- Do not approach or confront an aggressive patient or community member, but ensure your safety first, and follow the advice of your supervisors.
- Do not get involved or take sides in personal disputes between community members.

Going online



You can surf the internet for some strategies and assistance.

Refer to Sections 8 and 9 of this guide for a list of useful websites and telephone numbers.



section 4

Adapting to your new town and your position within it

Along with settling into a new community, you will need to settle into your new role as a health professional within it. Your role as a health professional will be an integral part of the community and could mean you meet people when they are feeling vulnerable as a patient then run into them in a social situation.

Being aware of any incidents or events within the community that are causing stress to members is important. Members of the community may be impacted by drought or flood threatening their livelihoods or may have recently lost family members.

All communities have their own culture and sub-cultures. As with any cultural learning experience, unwitting errors or embarrassments may be part of your process of adaptation. In adjusting, remember flexibility, sensitivity, respect for difference, a non-judgemental approach and optimism are key factors for developing positive relationships.

Keep in mind you are a new cultural element too and your new community will want to know about you and adapt to you. People have different ways of getting to know each other, so be prepared for direct and indirect questions and be open to opportunities to meet new people.

Confidentiality

You may get to know many clients well socially, which may make some community members reluctant to access health services. Also, people may be unwilling to acknowledge a problem for fear other community members will find out. Clients may have to travel long distances to see a health professional or may wish to travel to another area to avoid seeing someone they know in their own community.

It is imperative community members can trust their personal information is never shared with anyone. Socialising purely as a friend with community members who may also be your client may feel awkward at first, but soon you will settle into your dual roles within the community. If you feel unsure about how to act, seek out an experienced health professional in the community who can give you some advice.

Remember flexibility, sensitivity, respect for difference, a non-judgemental approach and optimism are key factors for developing positive relationships.



General health in regional and remote areas

According to research by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), health levels for people living in regional and remote areas can be lower than that of people in metropolitan areas.

Poorer health may be reflective of socioeconomic disadvantage, distance from health care services, lower educational levels and increased occupational risks.

Positives of the AIHW research were recorded, such as high social cohesiveness. People in regional and remote areas are more likely to participate in volunteer work and feel safe in their community.

Anxiety or depression in regional and remote areas

Mental health disorders are a large contributor to the total burden of disease and injury in Australia. It is important to be aware of this when on your placement and to be very clear about local services, policies and strategies.

Results of research from the AIHW show non-Indigenous males, Indigenous females and Indigenous males living in regional and remote areas are more likely to experience depression than those living in major cities. Anxiety is also a major contributor to ill health for all Australians.

Rates of suicide are higher among rural men (both Indigenous and non-Indigenous).

An awareness of the differences in cultural values and a commitment to developing sufficient understanding will help your process of adjusting to a different culture.

Indigenous communities

For Indigenous communities, social and emotional wellbeing is a holistic concept encompassing health and mental wellbeing, but acknowledges the significance of connection to culture, family, community and land.

An awareness of the differences in cultural values and a commitment to developing sufficient understanding will help your process of adjusting to a different culture.

Some universities and workplaces provide opportunities for cultural awareness training, so ask if this is available.

Your best contacts for information and advice are the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers in the community of your placement.

Managing disclosures

A person who has experienced physical, emotional and/or mental abuse is likely to be very distressed and this may put significant stress on you. It's important to know what to do in these situations and to be very clear about the local protocols for managing disclosure. The information below should not take the place of the local protocols of the health service of your placement. It is meant to be a starting point to begin to consider issues that may arise.

If a person discloses an abusive experience, you should explain to the person that you need to advise your supervisor and that the issue will be treated in strict confidence. Your supervisor has the advanced skills and professional contacts necessary to deal with these situations. Under national guidelines, some situations need to be reported and your supervisor will manage this.

Mandatory reporting requirements in most states and territories mean that instances of abuse need to be reported to the appropriate bodies if young people are involved. This can include the State or Territory Child Protection Agency and the police, but varies between localities. Read up on the local guidelines when commencing your placement.



As stated, it is crucial to ask your supervisor for advice as soon as possible and let him/her deal with the situation. However, if you're in a situation where you are the only person available, do not ask leading questions, but let the person you are consulting with tell the story in their own words, as this can influence further investigation. Document the conversation in the notes using an 'I said', 'He/she said' format, if possible, trying to use their exact words. This should be countersigned by your supervisor.

Remember: make sure you talk with your supervisor when you first start your placement. Be fully aware of the process of reporting disclosure before you begin your placement! Ask your supervisor direct questions about what to do if cases are presented to you regarding issues such as underage sexual abuse, physical or mental abuse.

Make sure that you debrief with skilled people and use the support services that are listed in this guide. They are there to help you. Your supervisor and university should also provide strong support for you.

Stigma of mental health

Mental illness, including depression and anxiety, still attracts a lot of stigma across Australia. Stigma and shame can influence how people raise their mental health concerns, if at all. With your clients, it might take quite a bit of sensitive digging to get to the heart of the matter. People may also be quite isolated and feel as though they aren't able to share feelings with their families. Cultural beliefs may mean emotions are expressed differently from the ways you would recognise. Organisations like *beyondblue* have several programs, resources and campaigns aimed at tackling stigma that you will find valuable (see Section 8).



Section 5

Students' stories

'A good way to think about the stressors is like thinking of them as stones collecting in an empty backpack.'

When something happens, you get some weight in your backpack, but often you decide it's nothing you can't handle and keep going anyway. The problem with that approach is that each "stress" stone makes the backpack heavier until one day even a small one can cause you to fall over. My experience supports this way of thinking.

I was living in a small Central Desert Indigenous community working as a Remote Area Nurse. It was quite early in my career. The community had a really positive impact on me and I loved my job in the clinic, especially working with the kids. When I began to work on-call, I had a few tough experiences. When you're on-call, the ambulance sits outside your house and people knock on the door when they need you (phones weren't common in the community).

I was awoken one night by a knock on my door and asked to attend a scene where a young man had taken his own life. It was very hard to deal with, but I soldiered on.

Not too long after, it happened again, and this one was much harder. I knew I was losing a part of myself each time I received that knock on my door and didn't know if I could handle another. I decided I didn't want to leave the community at such a tough time. There was much sadness within the community as they were constantly in mourning.

I chose to stay on and take up a position as a Health Promotion Officer and try and do something positive. I thought by changing my position, I would prevent tragedy knocking on my door. I knew the images of those boys and the sadness felt were burnt into my memory, but I made a conscious decision to "deal with it later, when I was ready".

I got some counselling and with the help of my wonderful family and friends, I got "me" back.

Eventually I left the community to begin studying medicine at university. As I was preparing, tragedy didn't knock on my door, but tore through my soul. A good friend of mine hanged himself. My backpack of stressors was all of a sudden very full and it felt as though someone had kicked my legs from under me. One week after his funeral I moved to Adelaide to start medicine in a new city where I knew only one person. I started having awful nightmares and flashbacks to the boys in the Indigenous community who had died before their time. I became withdrawn and couldn't see a way out of the nightmare.

Eventually I got some counselling and with the help of my wonderful family and friends, I got "me" back. There is no preventing these things from happening, but if something doesn't sit right with you no matter how small, talk to someone about it. It's much better to have talked things through than to wait until the backpack is so full you just can't go on!

Sarah



‘Growing up in a country town, I was aware that there were fewer activities to be involved with than in a city, but what was available was often attended by almost everyone in the district.

Therefore, on my placement I found that the easiest way to fit in was to go along to whatever was happening. In the town where I was, this happened to include swimming and tennis, as well as a swing dancing class run by my GP mentor. While I had expected to learn a lot from my mentor, swing dancing was not something that I imagined! But it was fun and I was able to meet more of the people in the area.

I’ve really enjoyed my rural placements so far and I’m looking forward to undertaking some more in the next couple of years. But there have been some challenges along the way. Settling into a new town where you don’t know anyone is pretty daunting, but fun. Challenging yourself in a new work environment is difficult, but rewarding. And moving home ... well, that just sucks!

Moving several times between rural placements was very unsettling, especially before my final exams, as it affected my preparation and made me pretty miserable. The time you spend packing, moving and unpacking again all starts to add up. Being organised makes everything about moving so much easier. I found it especially important to have my textbooks, folders and study things organised so that I could set them up easily in my new home. This meant I could set up my new study space easily and that moving to a new place didn’t disturb my study too much and I had more time to spend enjoying my new town (or cramming for the next assessment!). It also helps to carry a bit of home with you. For some people that is an old toy, some photos or your favourite music. I take some of these things, but I found that the most important thing for me was to make sure I settled into wherever I moved to and made that my home too. Rearrange the furniture a bit, put some flowers on your desk, and create a

sense that this new place is your home. It might all sound pretty trivial, but when moving around a lot is combined with a heavy workload, the little things really help make transitions much less stressful.

I took the chance to use one of my new rural placements in a new town as a new start for me in other ways. Since travelling to the hospital now only meant a five-minute trip all the way across town, I used the hours I would normally spend trekking into the city, exercising instead. Taking part in sports and going to the gym helped me meet people and helped me stay mentally healthy.

Making new friends in a new town is daunting, but exciting. Whereas I would normally only get to know other students in my course during placements at city hospitals, at rural hospitals I got to know people in lots of different roles at the hospital and this was great. Working with a smaller group of people also means the relationship with your supervisor is a bit different. There’s nowhere to hide when they ask a question. They notice when you don’t turn up, but it’s nice to have a drink with them on weekends.

Going out socially with my supervisors wasn’t without difficulties – a friendship where there’s a power differential can be awkward sometimes.

I really appreciated the network of friends that developed during my placements. I’m looking forward to keeping in touch with them.

Sometimes though there’s no substitute for ringing/Skyping/emailing/visiting your friends back home. My placements certainly made me value them even more. My few very minor “crises” (a crappy assignment, a bad day, a boy that didn’t like me after all) made me appreciate the love and support from my friends. It also made me realise it’s important to consider the people who support you and the resources available before you go away. Before you get yourself in hot water, it’s good to know who you can call if you have to.’

Robyn



Section 6

Health professionals' stories

'As a student, I undertook many rural placements in many different locations in SA, NT and WA.'

I am now working in the NT. Maintaining good mental health is not easy when you are isolated from your friends and family for weeks to months, so here are some of the things I faced and how I was able to deal with them.

The hardest thing I faced while on placement was dealing with my depression. This probably was not the result of my rural placement, but the fact I have depression myself. I was able to attend my placement, but with difficulty. I was in a new town and couldn't see my usual doctor. In the end, I realised I had to do something about it or I wouldn't be able to continue. I was lucky in that I was placed at a hospital and could see the GPs in the clinic without feeling I was being treated by someone who was also assessing me. This was the best thing I could have done and I really should have done it earlier. Whatever you do, don't be afraid of asking for help. If you can't see someone where you are, try to make arrangements to get back to your home town, if possible. This goes for whatever medical problem you face, whether it is mental health or something else.

Keep in touch with your friends and family, whether via phone or email, because you need someone you can talk to.

The most important piece of advice I can offer is to be involved in something you enjoy, whether it is sport, music or craft. Most places gladly welcome a new person to their activities. If it is sport, many rural teams are short of players, so they love having an extra person, even for a short time. It's also a great way to meet other young people outside your clinic or hospital. If that isn't your thing, find someone who enjoys movies, fishing or bush walking, and do that. Basically you need to do something other than go to your placement and come home. You never know – you may make life-long friends. If you are invited along to an activity – go, even if you think you won't like it! You need to take every opportunity to meet people otherwise you can become very lonely.

Keep in touch with your friends and family, whether via phone or email, because you need someone you can talk to, especially if you are finding things difficult. If there is something important at home, make sure you go even if you have to take a day off. Most rural doctors will understand because many are a long way from their families.

My final piece of advice is "get in" and "have a go". You'll never learn if you don't try something new.'

James



'Here's a familiar story: "I feel down, flat, it's difficult to become enthusiastic about anything. I have problems sleeping; I'm off my food and really can't concentrate on anything.

I have no idea why, as I have a good job, four great kids and a helpful, loving husband. No reason to feel stressed and depressed, but I do." This story is told to me in consults almost daily.

I have no hesitation in suggesting a diagnosis of depression and beginning to advise taking time out, relaxation, counselling and often medication.

A few years ago, I was stunned as I listened to a similar tale for the second time that day. I realised the client was actually accurately describing my life and me!

When was the last time I had had a good day? Could I possibly be experiencing depression too? I think I had known things were falling apart for some time, but dismissed those thoughts as "Health professionals can't be sick." "We are the people for everyone else to turn to." "It could never happen to me."

As I sat shaking in the waiting room, I realised just how much courage it takes to confront what you know inside.

I then did one of the bravest things of my life and made an appointment to see a GP, "just to make sure" I rationalised with myself. As I sat shaking in the waiting room, I realised just how much courage it takes to confront what you know inside. Equally, the relief I felt as I left his consulting room was immense (even though my "worst fears" had been confirmed). The problem had been acknowledged so I could begin the process of pulling myself back together.

This was the first step in what turned out to be a slow, arduous process of working through emotions, priorities and the acceptance that I could ask others for help. The amount of support, once people were aware of the problem was enormous, and has enabled life to return to hectic normality!

Michelle



Section 7

Preparing for your placement

Before you leave, run through this handy checklist and make sure you are as prepared as possible for the challenges and rewards a rural placement can give you!

Placement details

Contact Person's Name:

.....

Contact Person's Phone Number:

.....

Location:

.....

Dates:

.....

Address for Accommodation:

.....

Phone Number for Accommodation:

.....

Student Pre-placement Checklist:

.....

General

What do you need to take with you (e.g. linen, alarm clock, etc.)?

.....

What facilities are available to you (e.g. computer, internet, shops)?

.....

Should you take food with you?

.....

Do you need to take any resources/textbooks with you?

.....



More information is available



NRHSN Placements Guide
www.nrhsn.org.au



SECTION 7: PREPARING FOR YOUR PLACEMENT

Transport

What transport services are available to you?

How will you get around the community?

What is the travelling time from your accommodation to your workplace (walking or driving)?

Are you better off taking your own transport (e.g. car, bike)?

What is the community like (e.g. demographics, geography)?

Where do you go to find information about the community (e.g. shire, tourist information)?

What social, cultural or recreational activities are available in the community?

Is there a local Indigenous community?

What are the health services available in the community?

Are there any support services in the community?

What are the priority health issues for the community?

What else has the community got to offer?

Do you need to notify your workplace of flight/bus times?



Are you able to be picked up when arriving?

.....

Do you know details to pick up keys to accommodation?

.....

Do you need the taxi contact details?

.....

Do you need to phone the staff/supervisor for your roster and start time?

.....

Mail/phone contact details

.....

Do you know the phone number of your placement?

.....

Do you know the address of your placement?

.....

Do you have contact details of your supervisor?

.....

Accommodation

Do you know where you are staying and the contact details?

.....

Have you asked your supervisor for potential accommodation within your rural placement location?

.....

Does your accommodation provide cooking facilities, laundry, fridge, beds, linen, pillows, TV, microwave, crockery and cookware?

.....

Is your accommodation close to your workplace?

.....

How much will your accommodation cost?

.....



Uniform/clothes

What is your uniform or dress code?

What is the weather like where you are going and what type of clothes do you need to take with you?

Meals

Are meals provided and when?

Do you need to place orders for meals the day before?

How much do they cost (if getting lunch at hospital)?

Are special dietary needs catered for (e.g. Halal, Kosher)?

Orientation

What is your case load?

What are your working hours?

What are the policies and procedures of your workplace?

Who will you be working with?

Are there other students from the same discipline as you or other disciplines at the workplace or at your accommodation?

What other health professionals work in the health service?

Will you be travelling e.g. visiting remote communities? If so, what do you need to take with you?

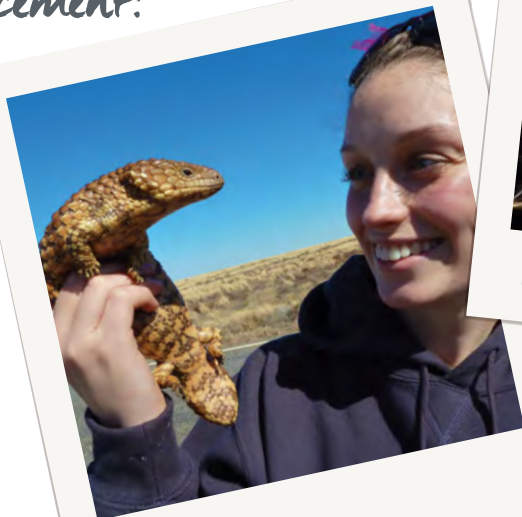
What facilities are available to you at the workplace (e.g. computer, library)?

Do you know who your supervisor will be?

Will you have regular contact with your supervisor?

Other important information

*Remember, good preparation
is the key to a good
placement!*



Be prepared to have some fun!



Section 8

National helplines and mental health services

The information listed here will be useful and may help you get through some rough times. It is important to recognise when you need to seek help from others. Don't go it alone!

Help and information

beyondblue

beyondblue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to increase awareness and understanding of anxiety and depression in Australia and to reduce the associated stigma. *beyondblue* is a bipartisan initiative of the Federal, State and Territory Governments, supported by the generosity of individuals, corporate Australia and Movember.

For information on depression and anxiety, available treatments and where to get support visit:



www.beyondblue.org.au

***beyondblue* Support Service**

The *beyondblue* Support Service provides advice and support.



Call 1300 22 4636
at the cost of a local call



Daily web chat
(between 3.00 pm – 12.00 pm) and
email (with a response within 24 hours)

Youthbeyondblue

Information on depression and anxiety and how to help a friend.



www.youthbeyondblue.com

BluePages

Developed by the National Institute for Mental Health Research, this website has tools for self-assessment of anxiety and depression, information on medical, psychological and alternative treatments, a link to a cognitive behaviour therapy site, a downloadable relaxation tape and a list of resources for depression.



www.bluepages.anu.edu.au

CRANApus Bush Support Services

The CRANApus support program is collectively known as Bush Support Services (BSS). BSS has an understanding that the particular mental health of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous remote health workers is a result of the unique nature of remote work. The BSS is answered by psychologists with rural and remote experience and with the capacity for repeat callers to speak to the same psychologist. Psychologists are able to offer practical coping strategies and survival tips to prevent burn-out and to prevent crises from developing.



Phone: 1800 805 391
Available 24/7



The Desk

The desk is a free online program aimed at providing Australian tertiary students with strategies and skills for success and wellbeing during their time at university or TAFE.



www.thedesk.org.au

Lifeline

Lifeline provides counselling services with the nationally accessible number for the cost of a local call. This is available through 42 Lifeline Centres across Australia. Lifeline offers face-to-face counselling services in many Lifeline Centres. Types of services and counselling service themes may vary from one centre to another based on the specific needs of each regional or local area.



Phone: 13 11 14
Available 24/7

MensLine Australia

MensLine Australia is a professional telephone and online support, information and referral service helping men to deal with relationship problems in a practical and effective way.



Phone: 1300 78 99 78
Available 24/7

Mindhealthconnect

Mindhealthconnect provides mental health resources and content from leading health organisations in Australia. You can access a range of mental health resources, including online programs, fact sheets, audio, video and online support groups.



www.mindhealthconnect.org.au

MoodGym

MoodGym is an interactive program that provides emotional and cognitive management skills for handling stress and depression. This website was developed by the National Institute for Mental Health Research at the Australian National University. Registration is required, but is free. MoodGym is a way to undertake cognitive behaviour therapy from home, gaining feedback as you go.



www.moodgym.anu.edu.au

Reach Out!

Reach Out! helps young people with information and support on a range of issues, including depression, dealing with exam stress and ways to get through tough times. The website includes forums, stories, 'stress-less' tips and is a great resource if you need help or if you just want to relax and stay at your best.



www.au.reachout.com

SANE Australia

SANE Australia is a national charity helping people affected by mental illness (particularly schizophrenia). It campaigns for improving services and attitudes, promoting understanding, and conducts research.

Social, Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Services in Aboriginal Australia



Phone: 1800 187 263
(9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday)



www.sane.org

Section 9

State and Territory help lines and mental health services

Australian Capital Territory

ACT Department of Health

Website: <http://www.health.act.gov.au/c/health>

Phone: 1800 629 354

New South Wales

NSW Department of Health

Website: www.health.nsw.gov.au/mhdao/Pages/contact-service.aspx

Phone: 1800 011 511

Northern Territory

NT Department of Health

Website: http://health.nt.gov.au/Hotlines_and_Helplines/Mental_Health_Support/index.aspx

Phone: 1800 682 288

Queensland

Queensland Department of Health

Website: <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/mentalhealth/>

Phone: 13 43 25

South Australia

SA Department of Health

Website: <http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/health+topics/health+conditions+prevention+and+treatment/mental+health+and+mental+illness>

Phone: 13 14 65

Tasmania

Tasmania Department of Health

Website: <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/Mental+Health+and+Wellbeing-1>

Phone: Lifeline 13 11 14



Victoria

Victorian Department of Health

Website: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthadvice/>

Western Australia

WA Department of Health

Website: <http://www.health.wa.gov.au/services/>

Phone: Metro 1300 555 788 or RuralLink 1800 552 002



Section 10

University support services

Adelaide University

Website: www.adelaide.edu.au/counselling_centre/

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (08) 8313 5663

Self-help brochures available at www.adelaide.edu.au/counselling_centre/brochures/

Australian National University

Website: www.anu.edu.au/counsel

Hours: 9.00 am – 4.45 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (02) 6125 2442

Email: Counselling.Centre@anu.edu.au

Charles Darwin University

Website: <http://www.cdu.edu.au/equity-services/counselling>

Hours: 8.30 am – 4.00 pm Monday to Thursday to 3.00 pm Friday

Phone: (08) 8946 6288

Email: equity@cdu.edu.au

Charles Sturt University

Website: <http://www.csu.edu.au/oncampus/student-support/health-counselling>

Student Central

Hours: 9.00am – 5.30pm Monday to Thursday and 9.00am – 5.00pm Friday

Phone: 1800 275 278

Student Counselling appointments can be booked via an online form under CSU Student Online Portal.



Curtin University

Website: http://life.curtin.edu.au/health_wellbeing/counselling_services.htm
Hours: 8.00 am – 6.00 pm Monday to Thursday and 8.00 am – 4.30 pm Friday
Website: www.counselling.curtin.edu.au
Phone: (08) 9266 7850 or 1800 651 878 (Freecall)

Edith Cowan University

Website: <http://intranet.ecu.edu.au/student/support/counselling>
Hours: 8.30 am – 4.30 pm Monday to Friday
Phone: (08) 9370 6706

Federation University

Website: <http://federation.edu.au/students/assistance-support-and-services/student-support-services/advice-and-counselling>
Hours: 9.00 am – 4.00 pm Monday to Friday

Ballarat and Wimmera

Phone: (03) 5327 9470
Email: counselling@federation.edu.au

Gippsland

Phone: (03) 5122 6425
Email: gippslandcounselling@federation.edu.au

Flinders University

Website: <http://www.flinders.edu.au/current-students/healthandcounselling/counsel.cfm>
Hours: 8.45 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday
Phone: (08) 8201 2118

James Cook University

Brisbane Campus

Website: www.jcub.edu.au/students/student-services/student-counselling-service.aspx
Hours: 9.00 am – 4.00 pm Monday to Friday
Phone: (07) 3001 7800
Email: studentcounsellor@jcub.edu.au

Townsville and Cairns Campus

Website: www.jcu.edu.au/counselling/
Hours: 8.30 am – 4.30 pm Monday to Friday
Phone: (Townsville) (07) 4781 4711
Phone: (Cairns) (07) 4042 1150



La Trobe University

Website: www.latrobe.edu.au/students/counselling/contacts

If the counsellor at your local campus is away, please contact Melbourne Campus.

Melbourne Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 9479 2956

Email: counselling@latrobe.edu.au

Albury-Wodonga Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 6024 9627

Email: counsellor.aw@latrobe.edu.au

Bendigo Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 5444 7223

Email: studentservicesbendigo@latrobe.edu.au

Mildura Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 5022 3614

Shepparton Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 5820 8600

Monash University

Website: <http://www.monash.edu.au/counselling/>

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 9905 3020

Melbourne University

Website: www.services.unimelb.edu.au/counsel/

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday

Phone: (03) 8344 6927

Newcastle University

Website: <http://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/support/health-counselling-and-wellbeing/your-mental-health/counselling>

Hours: 9.30 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (02) 4921 5801

Email: counselling@newcastle.edu.au



The University of Sydney

Website: www.sydney.edu.au/current_students/counselling/

Cumberland Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday and Tuesday

Phone: (02) 9351 9638

Email: cumberland.cs@sydney.edu.au

Camperdown Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (02) 8627 8433 or 8627 8437

Email: caps.admin@sydney.edu.au

University of Notre Dame

Sydney Campus

Website: www.nd.edu.au/sydney/current-students/counselling.shtml

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (02) 8204 4220

Email: sydney.counselling@nd.edu.au

Fremantle and Broome Campus

Website: www.nd.edu.au/fremantle/current-students/student-services/counsellingservice.shtml

Hours: 8.30 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (08) 9433 0580

University of New South Wales

Website: www.counselling.unsw.edu.au

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (Kensington) (02) 9385 5418

Email: counselling@unsw.edu.au



University of Queensland

Website: www.usq.edu.au/current-students/services/healthyu/support-services/

Springfield Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (07) 3470 4400

Email: studentservicespringfield@usq.edu.au

Toowoomba Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (07) 4631 2372

Email: stsv@usq.edu.au

Fraser Coast Campus

Hours: 8.30 am – 4.30 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (07) 4194 3125

Email: fcstdhub@usq.edu.au

University of South Australia

Website: <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/counsellingservices/>

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (City East) (08) 8302 2330

Phone: (City West) (08) 8302 0022

Phone: (Magill) (08) 8302 4423

Phone: (Mawson Lakes) (08) 8302 5006

Email: counsellors@unisa.edu.au

University of Tasmania

Website: www.utas.edu.au/students/counselling

Website: www.utas.edu.au/students/counselling/online-counselling

Hobart Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 6226 2697

Launceston Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 6324 3787

Cradle Coast Campus

Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday

Phone: (03) 6430 4949



University of Western Australia

Website: www.student.uwa.edu.au/life/health/counselling
Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday
Phone: (08) 6488 2423

University of Western Sydney

Website: www.uws.edu.au/currentstudents/current_students/services_and_facilities/counselling_services
Hours: 9.00 am – 4.30 pm Monday to Friday
Phone: (02) 9852 5199
Email: counselling@uws.edu.au

Wollongong University

Website: www.uow.edu.au/student/services/cs/
Hours: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm Monday to Friday
Phone: (02) 4221 3445

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Online: <http://www.aihw.gov.au/closingthegap/ItemDetails.aspx?id=301&type=pb>

beyondblue. www.beyondblue.org.au

Lifeline Australia 2005. www.lifeline.org.au

Mind Health Connect. www.mindhealthconnect.org.au

Reach Out. www.reachout.org.au





Rural Health Workforce Australia

Rural Health Workforce Australia is the national peak body for the seven state and territory Rural Workforce Agencies. Its not-for-profit Network is dedicated to making primary health care more accessible by attracting, recruiting and supporting health professionals needed in rural and remote communities. RHW is also committed to the future workforce through our support of the National Rural Health Student Network.

RHWA is funded by the Australian Government's Department of Health, to whom it provides policy and program advice.

RHWA (peak body)

www.rhwa.org.au

03 9860 4700

Rural Health West (Western Australia)

www.ruralhealthwest.com.au

08 6389 4500

NSW Rural Doctors Network

www.nswrdn.com.au

02 4924 8000

RDWA (South Australia)

www.ruraldoc.com.au

08 8234 8277

RWAV (Victoria)

www.rwav.com.au

03 9349 7800

Health Recruitment PLUS Tasmania

www.healthrecruitmentplus.com.au

03 6334 2355

Health Workforce Queensland

www.healthworkforce.com.au

07 3105 7800

Northern Territory Medicare Local

www.ntml.org.au

08 8982 1000



beyondblue

beyondblue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation working to increase awareness and understanding of anxiety and depression in Australia and to reduce the associated stigma. *beyondblue* is a bipartisan initiative of the Federal, State and Territory Governments, supported by the generosity of individuals, corporate Australia and Movember.

Learn more about anxiety and depression, or talk it through with our support service.

www.beyondblue.org.au

Support Service 1300 22 4636



beyondblue
Depression. Anxiety.



WHEN THE COWPAT HITS THE WINDMILL



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