



**10** IS ALL  
IT TAKES

**BARBEQUES GALORE  
SUPPORTER'S CARE KIT**



# You have what it takes to support someone you love.

Although we all go through difficult times in life, often men and women experience these situations differently. As a man, sometimes it is difficult to talk about your emotions. However, there are things you can do to get through tough times, and you don't have to go through it alone. The most important thing to realise is that difficult times will pass, and you can get through it.

**But how do you start the conversation?  
And where do you go from there?**



**In this Barbeques Galore Care Kit, we'll share some ideas on how to be there for someone who's having a tough time, and remind them that they're resourceful, resilient, capable, and loved.**

Your role is to provide a space for the person to feel safe and supported, so they can share their issues and feelings. They might need your help be linked in with a professional (i.e. GP or Mental Health Worker) or crisis service.

Your support can help significantly reduce their distress and help build connections with others.



# We need each other now more than ever.

No person should have to face their darkest moments alone. It is through connection that we can find hope. We are available 24 hours a day to listen, without judgement to any person in Australia who is feeling overwhelmed, experiencing crisis or needs to be heard.

Remember, if you are ever in crisis, Lifeline's telephone service is here to support you 24 hours, 7 days a week on **13 11 14**. You also have access to our 24/7 online chat (<https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat>) or 24/7 text service **0477 13 11 14** (<https://www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-text/>) support.



## What are some common causes of difficult times for men?

Everyone will experience situations differently, regardless of whether you identify as a man or a woman, but evidence tells us there are some situations which can be particularly difficult for men.

These include:

- Financial problems (e.g. debt, difficulty paying bills)
- Problems at work (e.g. job stress, job insecurity, difficulties with boss/co-workers)
- Unemployment, including redundancy
- Relationship problems (including difficulties with your partner/spouse, children, friends, parents, colleagues)
- Relationship breakdowns (e.g. through separation or divorce)
- Separation from children/family (due to relationship breakdown, work commitments, etc.) or child custody/visitation issues
- Physical health problems (e.g. illness, injury, chronic pain)
- Mental health problems (e.g. depression, anxiety)
- Environmental events or natural disasters (e.g. drought, flood, bushfires, cyclone)
- Death of loved ones
- Excessive alcohol or drug use
- Excessive gambling
- Bullying or harassment (e.g. at school or work)
- Dealing with sexuality issues (e.g. 'coming out', discrimination because of sexual preference or gender identity)
- Homelessness or housing difficulties
- Trauma or abuse (e.g. witnessing violence or warfare, physical, verbal or sexual abuse)
- Criminal or legal issues
- Significant change in circumstances (e.g. moving house or city/town, migration to/from Australia, becoming a parent, retiring from work).



## What are some common signs of stress and strain?

Different people show stress and strain in different ways. You may notice the physical symptoms of stress before you recognise your emotional feelings about a situation.

Some common signs of stress or strain may include:

- Physical symptoms, such as headaches, muscle aches/tension, weight loss or gain
- Feeling angry or aggressive
- Always feeling tired, lacking energy or motivation
- Increased nervousness, agitation, restlessness or fidgeting
- Often feeling down or depressed
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs or increased gambling
- Withdrawing from friends and family, becoming distant
- Having difficulty concentrating at work or school
- Having difficulty sleeping or sleeping all the time
- Feeling helpless or out of control
- Losing interest in activities that you usually enjoy
- Feeling hopeless, guilty, like you're a 'failure' or a burden to others
- Thoughts of harming yourself or others
- Feeling like nothing you do will fix the situation

All of these are common reactions to difficult circumstances. But, over time, they can have a negative impact on your health and may lead to physical or mental health problems (e.g. heart disease, ulcers, depression, anxiety).

Even though a situation may seem impossible to fix, there are a number of positive ways to cope with difficult circumstances that can help you get through it and find solutions.

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## Tips for Starting a Conversation:

The following information is not intended to stereotype and offered as a guide only.  
Each person's experience is unique and individual.

### 1 Just start the conversation

It doesn't matter how it starts, as long as it starts. It could be as simple as an observation such as; *'Hey, I've noticed lately that you haven't been your usual self... Is everything ok?'* You don't have all the answers. Just be caring and present to what comes up.

### 2 Ask twice

Ensure you let them know that you are really interested in their wellbeing. Don't settle for a *'I'm fine'* or *'Nah, I'm ok'*. It shows you are willing to listen to your mate now or when they are ready.

### 3 Read between the lines

Again, looking past the automatic, often self-protective response of *'I'm fine/all good'* and tune into their physiology. What is their body language trying to tell you/share about them? Does this look comfortable for them? *"I noticed you just turned away from me. Are you really doing ok?"*

### 4 Listen and Reflect

Listen without judgement and reflect back what you are hearing. *"I can hear how tough that must have been for you"*. Or *"It sounds like you are going through a really challenging time at the moment"*. Normalise mental health by talking about it directly.

### 5 Be Patient

This might be the first time someone has opened up to anyone to discuss how they are feeling. Thus, they may struggle to articulate/communicate exactly what that looks like/is.

### 6 Just be yourself

Presence begets presence. The more you can be honest and authentic in yourself, invites others to do the same no matter what they are going through.

### 7 Ask how you can help

Don't assume you know how you can help. Check in and ask what they need; what would be most beneficial for them in the way of support.

### 8 Talk during an activity

Engaging in a common interest activity like firing up the BBQ or going for a walk, could be an easy yet supportive way to help someone open up about their mental health.

### 9 Don't try and fix it

Listen for information and understanding. Resist the urge to offer suggestions or 'quick fixes'. This can often lead people to feeling dismissed, not fully heard or accepted.

### 10 You are not alone

Mental health affects us all in one way shape or form; at some stage in our lives. Being able to talk about it with a trusted friend, relative and/or health professional can be the first step in feeling better.





At Lifeline, we believe that everyone has the strength and capacity for learning, growth and change.

Sitting with someone in distress and truly listening to their feelings can provide them with a sense of connection and strength, which in turn can alleviate sadness and feelings of isolation.

**You don't need to have all the answers. Simply being there while offering compassion and respect can mean the world to someone who's having a hard time.**

**Places to go for help now:**

It takes courage and strength to ask for help. Seeking support from others can help you to get through tough times.

• **Lifeline for 24-hour telephone crisis support call 13 11 14. For more information visit [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)**

• **Lifeline Online Chat**  
(<https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat>)

• **Lifeline Text 0477 13 11 14**

• **Mensline Australia 1300 789 978**  
[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

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

• **Relationships Australia 1300 364 277**  
[www.relationships.org.au](http://www.relationships.org.au)

• **SANE Australia helpline 1800 688 382**  
[www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org)

Utilise online resources. Some good ones are:

• **Men's Health Australia:** [www.menshealthaustralia.net](http://www.menshealthaustralia.net)

• **Beyondblue:** [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

• **GLCCS (Gay and Lesbian Counselling and Community Services of Australia):** [www.glccs.org.au](http://www.glccs.org.au)

• **Multicultural Mental Health Australia:**  
[www.mmha.org.au](http://www.mmha.org.au)

• **Gambling help online:**  
[www.gamblinghelponline.org.au](http://www.gamblinghelponline.org.au)

• **Mensheds Australia:** [www.mensshed.org](http://www.mensshed.org)

Lifeline is Australia's leading crisis support and suicide prevention service. We're a national charity providing all Australians experiencing emotional distress with access to **24-hour crisis support.**

Providing all Australians  
with access to crisis support  
and suicide prevention services

Ready to help 24/7

0477 13 11 14

Text

13 11 14

Call

[lifeline.org.au](https://lifeline.org.au)

Online chat

