



Wellbeing and Resilience Information Handbook



**For parents, carers
and young people**





Acknowledgments

.....

**Developed in partnership with -
Mental Health & Well-Being Education & Training Providers (MIEACT)**

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the ACT, the Ngunnawal people.
We acknowledge and respect their continuing culture and the contribution they
make to the life of this city and this region.





Contents

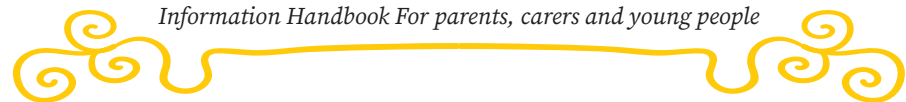
.....

About this handbook	2
.....
Stress and Me	3
.....
Self-Care	4
.....
Mental Load	7
.....
Wellbeing Activities/Groups	9
.....
Need More Support	12
.....



Printed in Canberra by Elect Printing, Fyshwick

Information Handbook For parents, carers and young people



Information Handbook For parents, carers and young people

About this handbook

We know that parents and carers have had a particularly hard time in 2020, managing your own wellbeing but also that of your family. This handbook has a range of useful information on supporting wellbeing and mental health for young people, parents and carers, and some details on relevant support services and programs available in Canberra.

Stress and Me

The term stress is commonly used but it's not always clear what we mean by it. This exercise helps us to reflect on how we personally experience stress. We must first identify what we are feeling before we can take steps to help ourselves. Using the picture below, draw a line from the stress symptoms you have experienced in the past to where you typically experience them in your body. For example, you might draw a line from tight muscles to your neck.

So, what can we do about it?

Focus on the things you can control.

Now that you understand a bit more about what stress is and what it looks and feels like in your body, we're going to learn some things you can do to make yourself feel better when you're stressed.

There are many things in life that we can't control.

No matter how hard you try, there isn't much you can do about these things. For example, you can't change the weather.

This is something that is out of your control. Sometimes, we can spend time worrying and becoming stressed about things we can't control. It is much better, to focus on the things you can control. Writing a list of things, you can control, will help you to focus your energy on them.

Learning to let go

But how can I accept those things I wish I could change? It can be really hard to let go and accept that you can't control some things. When we wish things were different, but we have no control over them – we can feel upset and annoyed. This is common.

Coping with stress

Writing down a list of things you can control is one way of coping with stress. But there are many others. Some will help you to calm down and some won't.

Self-Care

It is especially important to ensure that our wellbeing is looked after in times of uncertainty and stress. Supporting wellbeing and self-care not only helps us to feel happier and less anxious, it also helps us to have positive interactions with our family and friends.

Self-Care for Young People

STOP

S – Stop where you are, try not to let your emotions take control. E.g: Don't react or become defensive.

T - Take 3 deep breaths.

O - Observe your body. Are you ready to proceed?

P – Proceed mindfully.

In times of stress and anxiety try the following things that are proven to work for young people

- **Exercise.** Try a light walk, dance-off with your mates, or even yoga.
- Find ways to increase your **intake of healthy food**, like fruits, grains, protein, and vegetables.
- Try **mindfulness meditation**. Make it your own and do what relaxes you, listen to music, calm your body and free your mind from thoughts.
- **Use humour.** Laughter is free, easy and acts to reverse our response to stress.
 - Laughter helps bring us into the present moment, releases tension and promotes the production of feel-good chemicals.
 - Read a funny book, watch a movie or share a joke with a friend.
- Build positive self-talk by
 - Acknowledging a particularly challenging thought and reminding yourself that thoughts aren't facts.
 - Consider the evidence for and against this thought.
 - Challenge the thought by speaking to yourself with compassion. What would you say to a friend thinking the same thing?
 - Be kind to yourself and tell yourself out loud!
- Write it out. Try writing down how you are feeling or what's important to you.
- Ask for help.
 - There are many organisations focused on supporting young people. Refer to the "Need More Support" section in this handbook.
 - Identify 5 people you could go to for help.

- Visit your GP and other health professionals, keep trying as sometimes it takes a few visits to different professionals before you find the help that you need.
- Increase your knowledge about mental health by engaging in education.
- discussion your emotional health and wellbeing with your friends.

Self-Care for Parents and Carers

FAST

F – Be fair to others but also to yourself.

A - Don't be overly apologetic.

S - Stick to your values.

T – Be truthful.

In times of stress and anxiety, these strategies are proven to work for parents and carers

- Actively engage in self-care. This may be as simple as taking some long deep breaths.
- Acknowledge your impact. Count the things you have achieved at the end of the day rather than focusing on the things you haven't.
- Get out in nature with your children. Being outdoors can increase positive emotions.
- Talk openly and honestly with your children and family, using age appropriate language.
- Share your experience. Organise debriefing opportunities with friends, especially after a hard day.
- Limit exposure to news and media.
- Prioritise your physical needs. Sleep as much as you can, take a hot shower or a long bath, have a cup of tea.
- It's ok to show stress but try to reassure your children and remain as calm as you can.
- Ensure your basic needs are met. Concentrate on meeting the basic needs of you and your family.
 - Try meditation mindfulness, in whatever form you choose, deep breathing, taking a bath, listening to music, whatever feels best for you.
 - Get plenty of rest and eat well. Physical and mental health are closely linked, so taking care of one will help the other.
- Ask for help. We all need help sometimes.
 - Try talking to some of the free and confidential services like Parentline, Tel: 02 6287 3833. For more services refer to the "Need More Support" section in this handbook.
 - Don't be afraid to reach out for support. Being a parent or carer is not always easy and you need to prioritise your own self-care.
 - Talk openly about mental illness. Have open and honest conversations about mental health with your children.
 - Discuss helpful strategies. Help your children identify their emotions and engage in strategies to manage them.



Self-care at home

- Read a book
- Watch a funny movie or TV series
- Find a quiet spot to meditate
- Take a warm bath
- Write in your gratitude journal
- Practice deep breathing
- Listen to your favorite music
- Exercise – sweat it out at home
- Call a friend, call your parents/ grandparents
- Do a crossword puzzle
- Take a walk around a garden
- Bake bread – try a new recipe
- Stretch it out with yoga
- Sketch, draw, paint
- Knit, crochet, needlepoint

Pick 10 activities above or create your own and write them in the columns below. Each activity scores 1 point.

My Wellbeing/Self-Care Checklist

Date

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Average Daily Score							



Mental Load

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our daily lives which has unquestionably added to the mental load we bear. When the mental load isn’t shouldered equally within households, it can become a heavy burden that can lead to stress, fatigue and feeling overwhelmed, all of which can affect our mental health and wellbeing.

What is Mental Load?

Put simply, it is the never-ending to-do lists, organising, prioritising, and planning that helps keep our work, home, family and social lives running smoothly from one day to the next.

Why does the mental load fall so heavily on women?

Existing social norms and cultural expectations play a significant role. As women tend to be the primary carers of children, they tend to carry the majority of the mental load.

How to share the load

Hold a family meeting and start the conversation

Getting your family together and being open about the fact that mental load even exists as part of your day-to-day life is a big step towards sharing it.

Write it down

Hold a brainstorming session and write down all tasks and chores, from folding laundry to grocery shopping, reading the night-time story, to weekend sports. This is the first step to organising and distributing the mental load.

Share and delegate responsibilities

From the long list of chores and tasks, one spouse could take care of daily school preparation and after-school lessons, while another could plan and manage all weekend activities. Talk through the list with each family member circling the tasks they be able to take responsibility for remembering and carrying out.

Put the kids to work

Kids should help with chores as soon as they are able, but they often need management. Hand off some mental load by teaching them to self-manage. Make it fun, such as “be the boss of cleaning the table” “folding party host”, be patient, teach them and reward them at the end or earn some screen time once complete. Each parent can take turns to teach children the chores on their list. It might seem a lot of work and effort at the beginning but once your child masters the skill, you can sit back and relax. It takes an average of 66 days for a new behaviour to become automatic, be sure to push through!



Use technology

Almost everyone has a smartphone. You can use them to make calendar events or set a reminder for the rent check, weekend sports, birthday parties, afterschool activities and to keep a grocery list instead of asking your spouse. There are many apps that could assist you to share the load.

Reward and be kind to yourself

Realise you're probably a much better parent and partner than you assume – and relax. Imagine what you would say to a friend you loved: take care of yourself. Celebrating small wins with your family each week is a great way to keep everyone motivated.



Wellbeing Activities/ Groups

One really good way to support wellbeing is to get involved in local activities and connect with others.

Below is a list of some great activities for young people available in Canberra.

CYCLOPS

CYCLOPS, Anglicare ACT Youth and Family Services, is a program supporting young people, between 10 and 25 years old who care for a family member experiencing a physical or intellectual disability, mental health issues, alcohol and other drug related issues and/or chronic illness. CYCLOPS offers support that can help make life easier and promote opportunities for young carers to be more involved in community.

☎ 02 6232 2488

✉ cyclops@anglicare.com.au

anglicare.com.au/services/youth-family/young-carers/

CANTEEN

Canteen helps young people cope with cancer in their family, whether it is their own diagnosis or their parent or sibling's. Through Canteen, young people learn to explore and process their feelings about cancer and connect with other young people in the same boat. By feeling understood and supported, young people develop resilience and can rebuild the foundations that crumbled beneath them when cancer turned their world upside down.

☎ 02 61012207

✉ act@canteen.org.au

canteen.org.au/young-people/

Project Level Up

Project level up utilises high adrenaline, positive, safe, risk-taking activities as a platform for engaging disengaged and vulnerable young people in a positive mentoring environment. Young people involved in Project Level Up have generally had some contact with the justice system and may have a history of behavioural concerns at home and at school.





Touch Footy Comp

Canberra PCYC & Hands Across Canberra are running a touch football game in conjunction with the ACT Touch Football Winter Mixed Competition. Young people aged 12-18 are welcome to participate with PCYC staff and volunteers. Registration is essential. The game starts at 5:30pm Wednesday each week, at Deakin touch football fields.

Firebelly

Firebelly provides a fun and inclusive hour of sports and recreational activities including boxing for fitness, gym circuit work, and strength and conditioning. All young people are welcomed into the supportive Firebelly environment. Community organisations are welcome to refer young people at no cost, and to attend with their clients. Sessions take place from 4– 5 pm every Wednesday during school terms at PCYC Erindale Centre, 17 Grattan Court, Wanniasa.

 (02) 6296 7822
 admin@pcyc.net.au



pcyc.net.au/

ENCAMPMENT

Encampment is a peer mentoring and leadership program for LGBTIQ+ young people and their allies in the Canberra region. Encampment is run for young people, by young people.

Keeping Youth Connected

Keeping Youth Connected is a virtual youth group for LGBTIQ+ young people linking them with services and supports to meet their needs.

 02 6257 2855
 youth@meridianact.org.au

meridianact.org.au/young-people/

meridianact.org.au/kyc/

Youth Services



The Youth Services Team provide outreach and activities for young people aged 12-25 years who live, work or play in or around Belconnen. Activities are aimed at increasing resilience and developing skills that give young people opportunities to actively engage in their lives and their communities.



Bungee Youth Resilience Program

Bungee is an inclusive resilience building program that promotes emotional wellbeing through the arts. The program supports young people (aged 5-18) to participate in activities designed to build resilience, enhance wellbeing and social and emotional health.

The Bungee Youth Resilience Program provides individual support through counselling and tailored activities in a welcoming, supportive and child-friendly environment. The counselling sessions include discussion, creative activities and professional advice for parents.

 02 6264 0200
 contact@crcs.com.au

bcsact.com.au/programs-and-services/youth-services/

bcsact.com.au/programs-and-services/bungee-youth-resilience-program/

Organise your own group or activity!

There are so many awesome parks and sports grounds all around Canberra. Call your friends and get active together. Some the popular parks and sports grounds are listed below:

Basketball Courts:	John Knight Memorial Park	Belconnen
	Porter Street Neighbourhood Park	Wright
	Lawley Street Neighbourhood Park	Deakin
	Point Hut District Park	Gordon
	Yarrabi District Park	Gungahlin
	Lambert Place – Road Verge	Lyneham
Skateparks:	The Yard Skatepark	Braddon
	Belconnen Skatepark	Belconnen
	Eddison Skatepark	Woden
	Tuggeranong Skatepark	Tuggeranong
	Erindale Skatepark	Erindale
Youth Centres:	Belconnen Youth Centre – Belconnen Community Services	Belconnen
	Mura Lanyon Youth and Community Centres – YWCA	Conder
	Woden Youth Centre – Woden Community Services	Woden

Need More Support

ACT Wellbeing Calls	02 6234 7630 or email teleconnectact@redcross.org.au	communityservices.act.gov.au/connect-in-canberra/Community-Services-and-Support	Free social call to help keep you connected, between 8am and 4pm Monday to Friday. This Service can also provide referrals to a range of community services and supports across the ACT.
Connect In Canberra		communityservices.act.gov.au/connect-in-canberra	Connect in Canberra is an information hub to help you stay in the loop, keep connected, be part of your community and get assistance and support if you need it.
Smiling Mind		smilingmind.com.au	Modern meditation for supporting healthy minds.
Beyond Blue	1300 22 4636	beyondblue.org.au	Support programs to address issues related to depression, suicide, anxiety disorders and other related mental illnesses.
Lifeline	131114	lifeline.org.au	Lifeline is a national charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.
Relationships Australia	1300 364 277	relationships.org.au	Support services for people to achieve positive and respectful relationships.
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800	kidshelpline.com.au	Free and private counselling service specialising in young people aged 5-25 years.
Menslink	02 6296 8900	info@menslink.org.au	Free counselling service for men aged 12-25 years.
Junction Youth Health Services	02 6232 2423	junctioninfo@anglicare.com.au	Free health and support service for young people aged 12-25 years.
Moodgym		moodgym.com.au	Online education and self-help.
Australian Psychological Society		psychology.org.au/FindAPsychologist	Australia Psychological Society helps you find psychologists in your area.
Gungan Gulwan	02 6296 8900	gungan-gulwan.com.au	Free Indigenous health service for young people aged 0-25 years.
Suicide Call Back Service	1300 659 467	suicidecallbackservice.org.au	Provides immediate telephone and online counselling and support in a crisis.



Carers Act	1800 422 737	carersact.org.au	Provides support, information, respite, connection and education for carers of people who need assistance with the tasks of daily living. Phone line is answered 24 hours for emergency replacement care.
Covid-19 Helpline	02 6207 7244	covid19.act.gov.au/contact-us	The COVID-19 Helpline helps the community to stay informed and access services.
Emergency	If your situation is life-threatening, call triple 000 immediately (available 24/7) or go directly to Accident and Emergency at The Canberra Hospital - Yamba Drive, Woden, Calvary Hospital - Haydon Drive, Bruce		Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team (CATT) Access Mental Health 1800 629 354 (available 24/7) 02 6205 1065.

Information Handbook For parents, carers and young people
by ACT Government CSD COVID-19 Response | Community Resilience and Crisis Response Group
November 2020

