

Looking after yourself

[Improving your emotional and mental health](#)
[Supporting your physical health](#)
[Stay active in your community](#)
[Disability inclusion services](#)
[Work](#)
[Study](#)
[Volunteering](#)

Improving your emotional and mental health

You can start doing things today to help you improve your long-term emotional and mental health.

It is important to remember that everyone is different with different needs. Choose what you think will be the most beneficial to you at the stage of your life and recovery. Add to the things that you do, one at a time, rather than trying to take on everything at once. You may also find other things in life that improve your emotional and mental health that is not on this list. Remember to be kind to yourself and have realistic expectations.

- do things that positively impact other people. It helps build good self-esteem
- engage with other people and avoid isolation
- stimulate your senses and engage in meaningful and creative activities – enjoy art and craft, sports, music, cooking and nature
- discover new things. Using the brain helps to build new skills, retain skills and build resilience
- there are many mental and physical apps that you can load onto your smartphone or tablet to help provide information, help and motivation
- make time to remember the positive parts of your day, appreciate others, reflect on your strengths, and think about what you are grateful for. Writing down five things each day that you are grateful for is a great way to increase happiness
- use strategies to manage stress, anxiety and negative thinking. Mindfulness practice, meditation, prayer, journaling and breathing exercises may work for you

Supporting your physical health

It is important to look after your body as this has a direct effect on your emotional and mental health.

- Make sure that you stay on top of physical health conditions.
- Have regular health check-ups to help you resolve or manage any physical health conditions.
- Dental health effects far more than just our teeth. See a dentist regularly and practice good oral hygiene.
- Quality sleep is vital to good health. During sleep our body works to repair itself, consolidates memory and knowledge and helps promote recovery. Most people require 8 hours of sleep a night for optimum benefits. Too little and too much or lack of quality sleep can all cause health issues. Seek advice if you feel that you need help to get quality sleep.
- Exercise can relieve stress, lift your mood and increase general wellbeing. Consult your health care provider about an exercise plan for you.
- Limit your alcohol intake and avoid cigarettes and illicit drugs.

Stay active in your community

Engagement in work, study and volunteering contributes to positive self-esteem and wellbeing. Many people find returning to work or study can accelerate their recovery process and gives them purpose and validity.

Many people stay active in their community through community groups and accessing classes through their local community centres. (see the section 'Community Centres' on the home page to find a community centre near you.)

Many councils also have list of social, special interest and sports groups that you can get involved with. [See below for a list of councils and their live links.](#)

Some community organisations also run social inclusions groups that are usually free of charge or for a small fee. Check the directory for services near you.

Disability Inclusion Services

Disability inclusion services help people with disabilities (physical or mental) to access community and government services and help to provide short-term support and information for the individual to overcome barriers to participate in social opportunities.

Work

Working helps build and retain knowledge and skills. It increases independence, decreases isolation and contributes to an improved standard of living.

Many people can manage their mental illness and successfully continue to work. Work can be part-time or full-time and can be suited to your skills and abilities.

Job Access (a Federal Government initiative) and other specialist employment agencies are available

to help people with psychiatric and other disabilities prepare for and return to work.

Study

Studying is a great way to build your knowledge, make friends and increase your employability. Centrelink can be a great place to start if you would like to return to study or explore traineeship or apprenticeship opportunities. Contacting tertiary institutions directly can also be a great way to explore your options. Course advisors are often available for free to help you consider what's right for you.

There are also a lot of free e-learning or delayed payment sites that you can learn from home at your own pace. Ensure that you read all information before signing up for any course to ensure that you do not incur a fee.

Volunteering

Volunteering can be just as rewarding and valued as paid employment and is vital to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our communities. Volunteering can be formal or informal, full-time, part-time, or casual. Volunteering is a great way to do something of value, help others, meet people, and connect with your community. Volunteering Victoria is a good place to start, many council websites have a list of organisations that you can volunteer with, or you can contact organisations directly and enquire about their volunteer programs.

Councils

Banyule City Council www.banyule.vic.gov.au (03) 9490 4222

Bayside City Council www.bayside.vic.gov.au (03) 9599 4444

Boroondara City Council www.boroondara.vic.gov.au (03) 9278 4444

Brimbank City Council www.brimbank.vic.gov.au (03) 9249 4000

Cardina Shire Council www.cardinia.vic.gov.au (03) 5945 4222

Casey City Council www.casey.vic.gov.au (03) 9705 5200

Darebin City Council www.darebin.vic.gov.au (03) 9230 4444

Frankston City Council www.frankston.vic.gov.au (03) 9784 1888

Glen Eira City Council www.gleneira.vic.gov.au (03) 9524 3333

Greater Dandenong City Council www.greaterdandenong.com (03) 9239 5100

Hubsons Bay City Council www.hobsons.vic.gov.au (03) 9932 1000

Kingston City Council www.kingston.vic.gov.au 1300 653 356

Knox City Council www.knox.vic.gov.au (03) 9798 8000

Manningham City Council www.manningham.vic.gov.au (03) 9840 9333

Maribyrnong City Council www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au (03) 9688 0200

Maroondah City Council www.maroondah.vic.gov.au 1300 882 615

Melbourne City Council www.melbourne.vic.gov.au (03) 9658 9658

Melton Shire Council www.melton.vic.gov.au (03) 9747 7200

Monash City Council www.monash.vic.gov.au (03) 9518 3555

Moonee Valley City Council www.mvcc.vic.gov.au (03) 9243 8888

Moreland City Council www.moreland.vic.gov.au (03) 9240 1111

Mornington Peninsula Shire Council www.mornpen.vic.gov.au (03) 5986 0200

Nillumbik Shire Council www.nillumbik.voc.gov.au (03) 9433 3111

Port Phillip city Council www.portphillip.vic.gov.au (03) 9209 6777

Stonnington City Council www.stonnington.vic.gov.au (03) 8290 1333

Whitehorse City Council www.whitehorse.vic.gov.au (03) 9262 6333

Whittlesea City Coucil www.whittlesea.vic.gov.au (03) 9217 2170

Source URL: <https://mentalhealthcompass.com.au/mhis/looking-after-yourself>