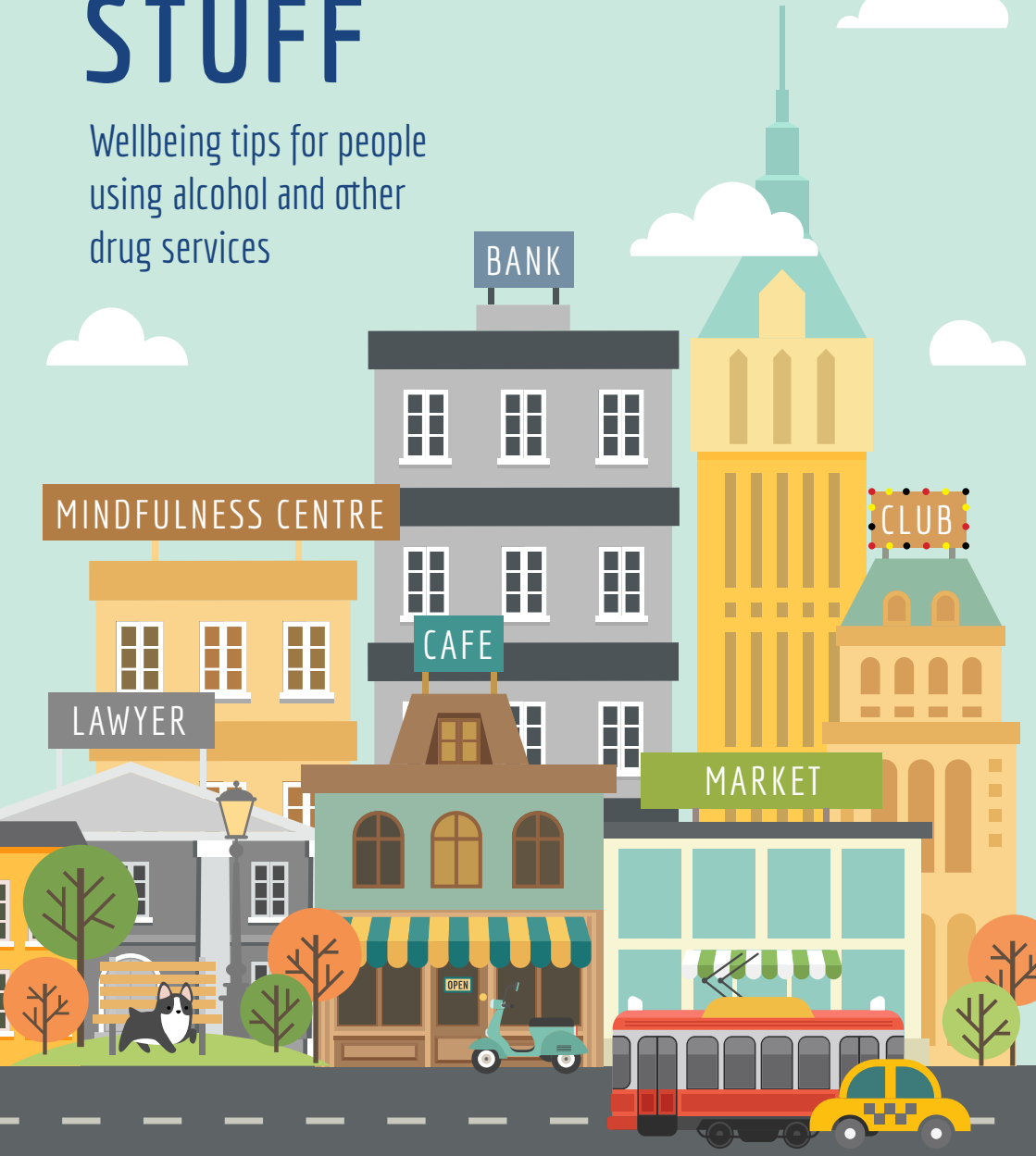




NORTH & WEST METRO AOD SERVICE

# HANDY STUFF

Wellbeing tips for people using alcohol and other drug services



This handbook was prepared by people who have used NW Metro AOD Services and some NW Metro AOD Services staff members.

We decided we wanted to put handy info into the hands of people like ourselves who have used AOD services and want to take further steps.

We hope anyone looking to improve their health, or perhaps struggling to maintain healthy living, will get something from this handbook.

To keep the information contained in this manual current, please direct new or changed information to [contact@regen.org.au](mailto:contact@regen.org.au)

Happy delving!

NW Metro AOD Services consumers and staff

## About North & West Metro AOD Services

Uniting ReGen and Odyssey House Victoria are working in partnership with a range of community health and welfare organisations to deliver alcohol and other drug services across North and West Melbourne. We provide a wide variety of services to support individuals and families affected by alcohol and other drug use.

For more information about our services:

 <https://www.regen.org.au>

 <https://www.odyssey.org.au>

 1800 700 514 (freecall)

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## Acknowledgment of country

We acknowledge that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under their own laws and customs. This their ancestors did, according to the reckoning of their culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from 'time immemorial', and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

(Adapted from Uluru Statement of the Heart, National Constitution Convention 2017)

# Alcohol, other drugs & tobacco



## Alcohol, other drugs & tobacco

If you don't want to address your addiction (or your problem) all by yourself, there are handy services to help you, and these come in various forms. These include telephone, face to face, group work and online support.

We understand that reaching out for support can be nerve racking! Calling the organisation or facilitator and asking questions before hand can help ease your nerves.

The questions may include:

- Do I need to bring anything?
- Are there any costs involved?
- How many people will be there?
- Do I have to talk at the first meeting?


When engaging in something for the first time we are in a better position of connecting with something if we have an open mind and are receptive to the fact in might not meet all our needs. A good thing to remember is take the best and leave the rest!

Please also remember that drug and alcohol services and support groups vary. They vary in size and purpose, and can be very different depending, for example, on the people who attend. So don't give up after the first go. Try at least a couple of times before you decide that the program is not for you.

## Telephone support

### DirectLine

 [www.directline.org.au](http://www.directline.org.au)

 1800 888 236

 Open 24/7

DirectLine is a confidential alcohol and drug counselling and referral service. DirectLine can provide you with information including:

- Online counselling
- Pharmacotherapy prescriber and pharmacy contact details
- Details of needle syringe programs and bin locations
- Details of drug and alcohol agencies and drug withdrawal beds
- HIV/AIDS information and referral
- Drink driving education and assessment referral

## Support groups

### Momentum

 <http://www.regen.org.au/treatment-support/support-and-therapeutic-groups/momentum>

ReGen in Coburg offers an on-going support group for people who have completed either of the Catalyst or Torque programs. The group is held every Wednesday night from 6.00 – 8.00 pm

### ReGen Peer Support Group

 <http://www.regen.org.au>

This group is run by people who have used ReGen services and is open to others as well. It aims for mutual support, learning and social connection.

The group is held every Thursday night, 26 Jessie Street Coburg, commencing from 6.00pm.

### AA (Alcoholics Anonymous)

 <http://aamelbourne.org.au/meetings.php>

 1300 222 222 Australia wide

 24 Hours Phone Line

AA is a fellowship meeting of men and women for whom alcohol has become a problem. The desire to stop drinking is a requirement for membership.

### NA (Narcotics Anonymous)

 <https://www.na.org.au/multi/>

 1300 652 820

NA is a fellowship meeting of men and women for whom drugs have become a problem. The desire to stop using is a requirement for membership.

## Support groups (cont).

### Al-anon

 <http://www.al-anon.org.au/alateen>

Support group for families and friends who are impacted by a loved one's drinking problem. Alateen is for adolescents whose lives have been affected by someone else's drinking.

### SMART Recovery

 <https://smartrecoveryaustralia.com.au>


A free group assisting people with problematic behaviours including addiction to drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, gambling and others. (But note: some meetings may ask for a donation to cover room rental etc.)

Also online.

Uses a variety of CBT and other motivational tools and techniques.

### New Life Program

 <http://www.linkhc.org.au/services/support/new-life/>

 1300 552 509

The New Life Program offers peer support groups for adults who want to engage in recovery from alcohol and other drug use.

The New Life Program is a six-level recovery program based on thirteen affirmations.



## Other supports for alcohol, other drugs and tobacco

### Needle and syringe program


 <https://www.directline.org.au/service-finder>

The DirectLine service finder now includes information on NSP and syringe collection services near you. These programs are able to provide you with a:

### Medication Support and Recovery Service (MSRS)

 <https://msrs.org.au/>

 1800 931 101


 8am - 5pm weekdays

A free and confidential service for anyone who is having problems with their use of prescription or over-the-counter medications. Services include specialist counsellors, nurses and peer support workers who can help you cut down, quit, or make changes in your medication use.

### First Step

 <http://touchbase.org.au>

 42 Carlisle Street St Kilda

 (03) 9537 3177

First step provides a range of addiction and mental health services, including:

- Legal service for criminal matters - fully funded by Legal Aid
- Mental health services (for people in Port Phillip)
- Four GPs that specialise in addiction

### Touch Base

 <http://touchbase.org.au>

Drug and alcohol website for LGBTIQ communities. The website includes drug information, peer education, sexual and mental health, safer use and recovery tools, harm reduction, support services.

## Other supports for alcohol, other drugs and tobacco (cont.)

### Quit

 <https://www.quit.org.au>

 13 78 48

Support for people who are considering or wanting to quit smoking cigarettes.

### Counselling Online

 <https://www.counsellingonline.org.au>

 Open 24/7

Free online drug and alcohol counselling. Supports include: chat online, email a counsellor, a peer support forum, and SMS support.

## Pharmacotherapy / Opioids

Pharmacotherapy is the term used to describe the use of medication (such as methadone, suboxone) to assist in the treatment of opioid addiction.

To get information about a program contact:

### DirectLine

 1800 888 236

 Open 24/7

### Naloxone

Naloxone is a drug that can rapidly reverse the effects of opioids such as heroin and prescription opioid painkillers.

Naloxone can save lives.

To find out about overdose prevention and education programs call North & West Metro AOD Services on 1800 700 514 or Harm Reduction Victoria on 9329 1500.

## Managing urges and cravings

Cravings/urges to use are a natural part of overcoming dependence. They're the result of long-term alcohol & drug use and can continue long after you stop using.

Below are a few strategies to support you to manage urges and cravings.

### Urge surfing

The main idea behind urge surfing is that you can initially join with an urge (as opposed to meeting it with strong opposing force), as a way of taking control of it. After you have practised urge surfing several times and become familiar with it, you may find it a useful technique when you have a strong urge to use/drink.

Many people, when they urge surf, notice that after a few minutes the craving shrinks and disappears. The purpose of this exercise, however, is not to make the craving go away but to experience the craving in a new way, noting the intensity and the duration, and watching both diminish over time.

### The 3Ds

**Delay** – Most cravings pass in about 20 minutes.

**Distract** – Take your mind off using by doing something else.

**Decide** – Remind yourself of all the reasons why you wanted to stop using/drinking.

### Harm reduction

Harm reduction is a set of practical strategies and ideas aimed at reducing negative consequences associated with drug use. Below are services that focus on Harm Reduction.

#### Harm Reduction Victoria

 <http://hrvic.org.au/>

HRV's website provides non-judgmental, accurate, up-to-date information so that you can make healthy choices for yourself. Services/programs include PAMS (Pharmacotherapy Advocacy Mediation Support), DanceWize (formerly known as RaveSafe) and the Peer Network Program for people who inject drugs.

#### Alcohol and Drug Foundation (ADF)

 <https://adf.org.au>

Provides information about alcohol and other drugs with an emphasis on harm reduction.

## Mobile phone apps / Online resources

Apps are an accessible, handy tool; but please be aware that if you are downloading a mobile phone app, program or software from a website to your computer, this will use some of your data allowance. Please check with your phone company or internet provider to determine how much data you have available before downloading anything, or you may incur extra charges on your next internet or phone bill.

### Daybreak - by Hello Sunday Morning

[www.hellosundaymorning.org](http://www.hellosundaymorning.org)

Hello Sunday Morning is a movement toward a better drinking culture.

Daybreak is available on the App Store and Google Play. Daybreak is an alcohol support program that works on the idea that being with people helps to create positive change.

### Cognitive Diary CBT Self Help

A tool that enables you to do your own ABCDE process. It will prompt you if you forget the next step and it also contains helpful explanations of each Thinking Error, as well as lots of disputations.

### Quit Now: My Quit Buddy

It includes helpful tips and distractions to overcome cravings and can be customized to include your own goals and the reasons why you are quitting.

### Drinks Meter

<https://www.drinksmeter.com/>

Drinks Metre provides anonymous personalised feedback on your alcohol use.

### Drugs Metre

<http://www.drugsmeter.com/>

Also available on App and Google Play store.

Drugs Meter provides anonymous, personalised feedback on your drug use.



# Mental health



## Mental health

Our mental health is important because it impacts how we handle stress, the way in which we interact with family and friends, and the choices we make.

### Gratitude journal

One way you can improve your mental health and increase your level of happiness is by creating a gratitude journal. A 2003 study by Emmons & McCullough found that those who kept gratitude journals on a weekly basis exercised more regularly, reported fewer physical symptoms and felt better about their lives as a whole<sup>1</sup>.

A gratitude journal becomes a place where we can record the things we are grateful for which then shifts our attention to the positive things in our life. When we are feeling down, reading the journal can improve our mood by drawing attention to the good things in our life.

What do I write in a gratitude journal?

Just before bed, reflect on your day and write three things that you are grateful for. This can be integrated into your sleep routine (see Sleep page 27) and can be a good way to put you in a positive state of mind before you go to sleep.

Try to include **why** you are grateful and **what you feel!** Examples are provided below:

- I am grateful I walked to the shops today. I felt happy being in the sunshine for 30 minutes.
- I am grateful I made a dentist appointment today. I have been putting it off for a long time and am relieved I attended the appointment.

You can purchase gratitude journals, print off free templates from the internet or you can simply record your daily gratitudes in an exercise book.

Keeping your gratitude journal and a pen next to your bed can be a useful way to support you to remember writing in the journal on a regular basis.

Remember, it is common to experience 'gratitude block', particularly when you first begin writing in your gratitude journal. Take your time and don't rush the experience. Try to reflect on your day from start to finish, taking the time to connect with even the smallest things you are grateful for that occurred in the day.

## Telephone support

If someone has tried to harm themselves or someone else, or you think they are about to, call triple zero (000) immediately.

### Suicide Help Line

 <https://www.suicideline.org.au/>

 1300 651 251

 Available 24/7

Support and counselling service for people experiencing suicidal thoughts. Website includes important information on creating safety plans and recovering from a suicide attempt.

### Lifeline

 <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>


 13 11 14

 Available 24/7

Lifeline provides people experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

### Suicide Call Back Service


 <https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>

 1300 659 467

The Suicide Call Back Service provides immediate telephone counselling and support in a crisis. They can provide up to six further telephone counselling sessions with the same counsellor scheduled at times best suited to your needs.

### beyondblue

 <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

 1300 224 636

 Available 24/7

Support for depression and anxiety related disorders. The website includes information about mental health, an online forum, webchat and an email support service.

## Telephone support (cont.)

### Switchboard/QLife

 <http://www.switchboard.org.au/>

 1800 184 527

 3pm-12am every day. Also online.

Peer-based support service for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex people (LGBTQI).

### Wingmen

 <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/who-does-it-affect/lesbian-gay-bi-trans-and-intersex-lgbti-people/wingman-for-gay-guys-by-gay-guys>

Wingmen is an online resource run by gay men for gay men. Offers an online tool for providing support for a mate and volunteer opportunities.

## Other supports

### Psychiatric Triage / CATT – the crisis assessment and treatment team

Psych triage can alert a crisis assessment and treatment team (CATT) for you. They can also give advice over the phone. The CATT can provide help during a mental health crisis. A mental health crisis can include:

- a psychotic episode
- self-harm
- feeling suicidal
- feeling out of control.

You can search for the contact details of the triage service in your region at the following website

 <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthservices/adult/>

It might be a good idea to find the number of the psychiatric triage team in your area ahead of time, so you can put it into your phone for when you need it.


If you're in North-West Metropolitan Region, call:  1300 874 243



## Other supports (cont.)

### Mensline

 <https://mensline.org.au/>

 1300 789 978 Australia wide

Telephone and online counselling service for men with family and relationship concerns. The website includes tips and tools about parenting, emotional wellbeing and suicide prevention.

### Neami National

 <http://www.neaminational.org.au/>

 8691 5300 to find your nearest service

Neami National is a community mental health service supporting people living with mental illness to improve their health, live independently and pursue a life based on their own strengths, values and goals.

Services include individual outreach support, community programs and service coordination.

### MIND


 <https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/>

 1300 286 463 for service information

MIND provides practical and motivational support that helps people to develop the skills they need to move on, thrive and improve the quality of their lives. This includes helping people with the things that make them feel strong and healthy, such as being in control of their life, being resilient and participating in their community. MIND also works with people to address poverty, housing, education and employment.

### Grow

 <https://www.grow.org.au/vic/>

 03 9528 2977 or Freecall 1800 558 268 (during business hours)

Grow is an Australian community-driven charity specialising in mental health support services. The Grow program is a holistic, group support model based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. Group meetings at many venues around Melbourne and regional Victoria. Meetings are also held for carers, family and friends.

## Other supports (cont.)


### ARCVic (Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria)

 <https://www.arcvic.org.au/our-services>

The Anxiety Recovery Centre Victoria (ARCVic) is a state-wide, specialist mental health organisation, providing support, recovery and educational services to people and families living with anxiety disorders.

ARCVic facilitates skills-based group therapy and support groups for people with anxiety disorders. They also provide useful information on anxiety disorders.


### OCD & Anxiety Helpline

 1300 269 438 or 03 9830 0533 10am – 4pm Monday to Friday

You can ring them in the middle of a panic attack.

### PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia)

 <https://www.panda.org.au/>

 1300 726 306

PANDA supports women, men and families to recover from post and antenatal depression and anxiety. Perinatal anxiety and depression can be an isolating and scary experience. That's why it's important to know the signs and seek help early.

The website also includes factsheets about anxiety and depression in pregnancy and early parenthood as well as info on how to find online forums, and perinatal anxiety and postnatal support groups and organisations.

### On track

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

OnTrack aims to support people to achieve mental and physical health and wellbeing. The website offers online psychology services including: free online treatment programs, information and facts about mental and physical health, information and advice on where to get help and access to quizzes with immediate feedback.

## Mental Health Care Plan

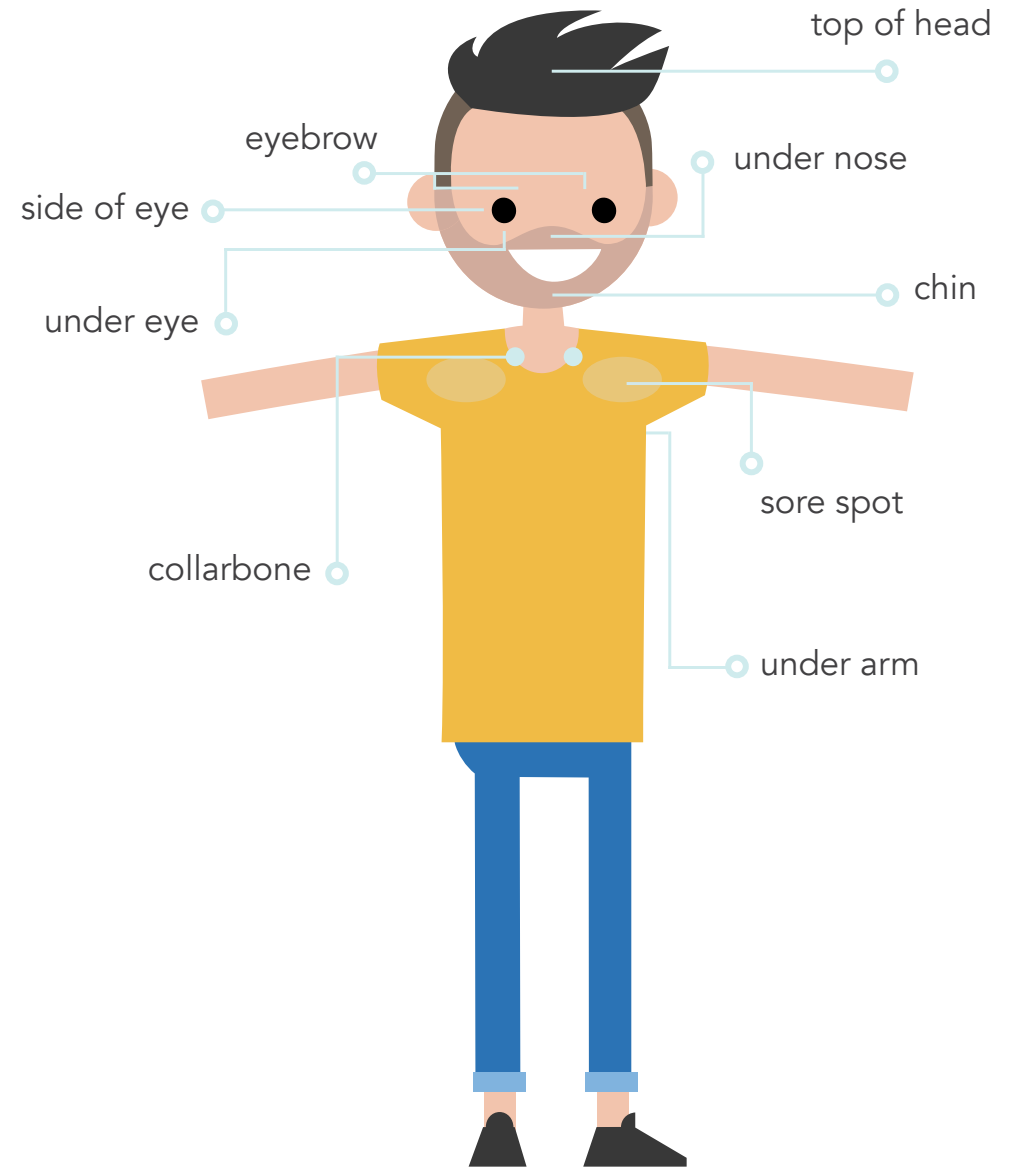
If you are wanting to see a psychologist, it is worth talking with your GP about a Mental Health Care Plan. If you have a Mental Health Care Plan, you will get money back from Medicare for up to 10 individual or 10 group appointments with an allied mental health service in a year. That means for certain psychologists, counsellors and social workers, you are also entitled to Medicare rebates for 10 support group sessions in a year.

To access this program, **visit your local doctor** who will assess whether you have a mental disorder (including depression or anxiety as well as more debilitating disorders) and whether you will benefit from a mental health treatment plan.

## Mindful tapping

Mindful tapping is a non-invasive, easy-to-learn tapping therapy that can be self-applied. Although not yet accepted as an evidence-based therapy, recent clinical trials have indicated that mindful tapping may be effective for trauma, cravings, phobias and stress.

To learn about how tapping can help (and how to do it for yourself) check out Brad Yates' YouTube channel. It includes a great range of videos on topics such as focus, cravings, clearing anger, rejection and abandonment, gratitude and goals.



## Mobile phone apps / Online resources

Keeping a mood diary can be a valuable component of treatment for psychological disorders including bipolar disorder, major depression, and anxiety.

There are some very good apps that can help with this. Mood tracking apps provide a systematic and portable means of rating mood symptoms over time, and allow the user to better understand how emotional states vary with thoughts, behaviours, and experiences.

App prices vary by select features. All basic functions in the apps listed here are provided for free. Here are a few:



### Mood tracker Diary

'Moodtrack Diary is the simplest and most flexible of the mood tracking apps reviewed here. Mood states are entered freely, without a menu of mood options to choose from, and are rated on a scale from 1 (best) to 5 (worst). Each entry includes additional space for comments.' (Dr. Alice Saperstein, Ph D, clinical psychologist Columbia University)

### Moodlytics

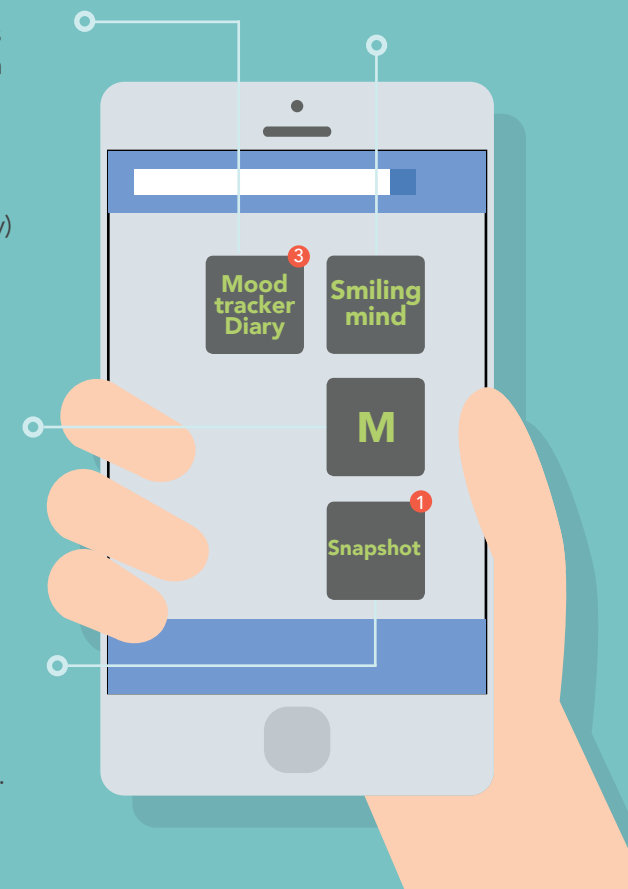
Moodlytics offers a more in-depth, guided mood tracking experience. The app allows you to gain insight into when and why different mood states occur, and provides the option to set and track specific mood related goals.

### Snapshot

Snapshot is an app designed by the Black Dog Institute. It allows people to measure, monitor and manage factors that may influence depression and anxiety.

### Smiling mind

This is a unique web and app based tool developed by psychologist and educator to help bring balance to people's lives.



# Physical health



## Physical health

Maintaining physical health includes managing health conditions, and making healthier lifestyle choices like eating, sleep and exercise.

Some free or low-cost agencies can help people who are experiencing an addiction, experiencing health issues from intermittent alcohol and other drug use, or in recovery with general health concerns. These include:

### Free or low-cost agencies

#### Victorian Aboriginal Health Services (VAHS)

 <https://www.vahs.org.au/>

The VAHS services include:

- medical
- healthy lifestyles
- dental
- family counselling services
- women's and children's health services
- men's wellbeing.

 There are two VAHS Clinics:

- 1 VAHS Fitzroy: (03) 9419 3000
- 2 VAHS Preston: (03) 9403 3300
- 3 After hours locum service: 132 660

## Free or low-cost agencies (cont.)

### CoHealth

 <https://www.cohealth.org.au/>

CoHealth provides health and support services including free or low-cost:

- doctor
- dental
- podiatry
- mental health
- child health
- drugs & alcohol

 CoHealth can be contacted by phone at:

- 1 Collingwood, Fitzroy, Melbourne CBD: (03) 9448 5528
- 2 Kensington, North Melbourne, Niddrie: (03) 9448 5520
- 3 Footscray, Braybrook, Werribee, Melton: (03) 9448 5502

### Better Health Channel

 <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>

The site provides information to help you better understand and manage your personal health and wellbeing. Here you can find a list of services available across various health topics including alcohol and drug, mental health and wellbeing support for LGBTI people, child family and relationship services etc. Also contains information on healthy living, recipes and information on various health conditions and treatments.

### Public hospitals

To find your nearest or most appropriate public hospital / emergency department go to:


 <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/hospitals-and-health-services/public-hospitals-victoria>

## Women's health

### Women's Health Victoria

 (03) 9662 3755 / 1800 133 321 (toll free)


### Young Women's Health Service

 (03) 9548 3255

### Royal Women's Hospital

 <https://www.thewomens.org.au/>

 Cnr Grattan St & Flemington Rd, Parkville 3050


 (03) 8345 2000


The Royal Women's Hospital offers many clinics such as gynaecology, breast health, mental health, menopause, pregnancy and birth, unplanned pregnancy and sexual health.

## Men's health

### Epworth Men's Health Clinic

 <https://www.epworth.org.au/Our-Services/Epworth-Freemasons-Clinics/Pages/Mens-Health-Clinic.aspx>

 113 Albert St, East Melbourne 3002

 (03) 9418 8162

Epworth Men's Health Clinic treats health problems that typically affect men, such as:

- high blood pressure
- heart conditions
- weight management
- prostate concerns
- urinary problems
- sexual dysfunction
- lack of general physical fitness

## Physical activity

### YMCA Open Doors

 <http://victoria.ymca.org.au/support/ask-for-support/how-to-apply-for-support.html>

YMCA Open Doors is targeted at people and families whose financial circumstances make them unable, not unwilling, to pay the full fee of YMCA programs and services.

Applications must be nominated by a referral agency to access eligibility for subsidised access.

Check out the 'how to apply for support' page or contact your local YMCA centre for more information.

### Outdoor exercise equipment

Outdoor gym equipment is available to be used freely by any member of the public for teenagers through to seniors. The equipment provides a cardiovascular workout, developing most muscle groups while enjoying the scenic outdoors. With the outdoor exercise equipment, you can enjoy your exercise any time for free and no commitment.

- Coburg Lake, Coburg
- ATC Cook Reserve, (Daley Street, Glenroy)
- De Chene Reserve, (Urquhart Street, Coburg)
- Brearley Reserve, (Heliopolis Street, Pascoe Vale South)
- CB Smith Reserve (Jukes Road, Fawkner)

Your local council can provide you with other locations of the outdoor exercise equipment in your area.

### Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

(See details under 'Meaningful use of time' on page 49.)

### Heart Foundation Walking Group

 <https://walking.heartfoundation.org.au/walking/victoria>

Australia's largest free walking network. Here you can find various details of speeds and durations of walking groups in your area.

## Sleep

Sleep is important for physical, mental and emotional health. It can also impact our ability to make good decisions. This is why it is worth thinking about what we can do to get enough sleep.

Getting a good night's sleep can be difficult whether we are using substances or withdrawing because of the bodily changes that occur.

The information below may be helpful for you if you are finding it hard to sleep.

Sleep hygiene tips:

- Get regular. This means training your body to sleep well. Go to bed and get up at more or less the same time every day, even on weekends and days off!
- Sleep when sleepy. Sleep when you are sleepy. Avoid lying awake in bed.
- Get up! Try again! If you haven't been able to get to sleep after 20 minutes or more, get up and do something calming or boring until you feel sleepy, then return to bed and try again. So you don't completely wake up, don't do anything that is too stimulating or interesting.
- No caffeine & nicotine for at least 4-6 hours before going to bed. Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants that keep you awake.
- No alcohol at least 4-6 hours before you go to bed. Alcohol makes you wake up during the night.
- Bed is for sleeping and sex. So your body learns this only sleep and sexual intimacy. Try not to use your bed for anything else.
- No naps unless this is before 3 pm and only for one hour. Otherwise, it is better to not have a nap during the day to make sure that you are tired at bedtime.
- Sleep rituals. You can develop your own rituals of things to remind your body that it is time to sleep - Relaxing stretches or breathing exercises for 15 minutes before bed each night, or sit calmly with a cup of caffeine-free tea may be quite helpful
- Have a bath 1-2 hour before bedtime, a bath will raise your body temperature. Your body will become sleepy when your temperature drops again.
- No clock-watching. Frequently checking the clock during the night can wake you up

- Exercise. It helps with good sleep, but try not to do strenuous exercise in the 4 hours before bedtime. Morning walks are a great way to start the day feeling refreshed!
- Eat right. A healthy, balanced diet will help you to sleep well, but timing is important. Some people find that a very empty stomach at bedtime is distracting, so it can be useful to have a light snack, but a heavy meal soon before bed can also interrupt sleep. Some people recommend a warm glass of milk, which contains tryptophan, which acts as a natural sleep inducer.
- The right space. It is very important that your bed and bedroom are quiet and comfortable for sleeping. A cooler room with enough blankets to stay warm is best, and make sure you have curtains or even a mask to block out early morning light and earplugs if there is noise outside your room.
- Keep daytime routine the same. Even if you have a bad night sleep and are tired it is important that you try to keep your daytime activities the same as you had planned. That is, don't avoid activities because you feel tired. This can reinforce the insomnia.

## Dental

### Dental Health Services Victoria

 <https://www.dhsv.org.au/home>

 Dental emergency call: (03) 9341 1000

Find your closest local community dental clinic by suburb.

The website also includes information about the **Royal Dental Hospital of Melbourne (RDHM)**, which provides general, specialist and emergency dental care to all eligible Victorians.

### CoHealth

 <https://www.cohealth.org.au/health-services/dental-care/>


Provides low cost or free dental care to concession card holders, children of low income earners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, pregnant women, registered clients of mental health and disability services, refugees and asylum seekers and homeless people.

 This service is available at 3 locations:

- 1 Footscray: (03) 8398 4100
- 2 Kensington: (03) 8378 1670
- 3 Niddrie: (03) 8378 3566

## Dental (cont.)

### PANCH Health Service

 (03) 8470 1111

Free or inexpensive dental care is available at PANCH in Preston for people of all ages.

### Merri Health

 <https://www.merrihealth.org.au/>

Merri Health Dental offer free or low-cost dental treatment to:

- adults aged 18 years and over, who have a health care card, a pensioner concession card or is a dependent of a concession card holder
- all refugees and asylum seekers
- all children aged 0-12
- young people aged 13-17 years who hold a Health Care or Pension Concession Card, or dependents of concession card holders
- all children and young people up to 18 years of age, who are in out-of-home care provided by the Children, Youth and Families division of the Department of Human Services.

### Banyule Community Health

 <http://www.bchs.org.au/Services/dental-public>

 (03) 9450 2000 (dental reception)


A full range of dental services are provided to the community including:

- Early Childhood Oral Health Program / School Dental Program
- Commonwealth Child Dental Benefits Schedule
- Community Dental Program

Check out the website for details about eligibility for these programs or call the dental reception.

### Victorian Aboriginal Health Service

 <https://www.vahs.org.au/>

 (03) 9419 3000

VAHS provides medical, dental, and social services to the aboriginal community.

## Optometry

### Australian College of Optometry

 <http://www.aco.org.au/eye-care-services/eye-care-on-low-incomes>

 (03) 9349 7400

The Australian College of Optometry (ACO) delivers high quality, low-cost eye care services to the Victorian community through a network of clinics and practitioners in **Melbourne and rural Victoria**.

To be able to attend an ACO clinic you will need to be a permanent resident of Victoria who:

- holds a Pensioner Concession Card in your own name, or
- holds a Health Care Card in your own name, or is listed on a Health Care Card, for at least 6 months continuously

## Sexual Health

### The Melbourne Sexual Health Centre

 (03) 9347 0244 / 1800 032 017 (toll free)

The Melbourne Sexual Health Centre provides a clinical and information on sexually transmitted infections.


### Family Planning Victoria

 <https://www.fpv.org.au/>

Family planning Victoria has a focus on reproductive and sexual health care.


The website provides a range of information on topics such as contraception, pregnancy, reproductive and sexual health. There are two reproductive and sexual health clinics:

 Box Hill

 Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

 Telephone: 03 9257 0100

 Melbourne CBD

 Mon-Fri 8am-6pm

 (03) 9660 4700 or (03) 9257 0100

## Sexual Health (cont.)

For general advice and information, call the Box Hill clinic and ask to speak with a nurse for reproductive and sexual health advice.

### Blood Borne Virus

#### Hepatitis Victoria


 <https://www.hepvic.org.au/>


 Hep C line 1800 800 241

Hepatitis Victoria is the peak not-for-profit community organisation working across the state for people affected by or at risk of viral hepatitis. This service offers information, resources and volunteering opportunities.

### Pronto

 <http://pronto.org.au/>

 (03) 9416 2889

 Monday – Thursday 9.00am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm – 8.00pm  
Saturdays 10.30am-2.30pm.

This website offers free confidential rapid HIV testing for gay and men who have sex with men. You can also find a trans-gender friendly general practitioner. Either book online or phone the above number.


### PrEP

PrEP is a prevention strategy against contracting HIV. You can also access the PrEP clinic via this site:

 <http://pronto.org.au/prep/>

### Living Positive Victoria

 <http://livingpositivevictoria.org.au/>

 (03) 9863 8733

Living Positive Victoria is a not-for-profit, community-based organisation representing all people living with HIV in Victoria and is committed to the advancement of human rights and wellbeing of all people living with HIV. Services offered including HIV treatments, prevention, speaker bureau, and leadership.



# The law




## The law

You may find yourself in circumstances where you need legal advice or help. If this is the case it is important that you seek advice or help as soon as you can. It is especially important to know your rights with the police, particularly if you've been apprehended by the police. There may also be specific information that you require in relation to specialised areas of the law such as mental health, disability, violence against women and children, areas relating to aged persons and those relating to renting a private property.

### Legal Services

#### Federation of Community Legal Centres Victoria

 [www.communitylaw.org.au](http://www.communitylaw.org.au)

 (03) 9652 1500

Outlines the different types of legal centres in Victoria. Enter in your postcode to find your nearest generalist community legal centre.

#### Victorian Legal Aid

 <https://www.legalaid.vic.gov.au/>

 1300 792 387


14 offices throughout Victoria plus lawyers at courts and tribunals.

Help given to people with their legal problems. They focus on protecting the rights of Victorians and representing those who need it the most.

There is a range of useful resources on the website including important information about police powers and your rights.

#### Fitzroy Legal Services

 <http://www.fitzroy-legal.org.au/>

 (03) 9419 3744

 Fitzroy Town Hall Level 4, 126 Moor Street, Fitzroy 3065

Provides legal advice and legal representation.

## Legal Services (cont.)

### Justice Connect

 <https://www.justiceconnect.org.au/>

Provides intake assessment of legal issues and the referral to pro bono lawyers who will assist for free.

### Mental Health Legal Centre

 [http://www.communitylaw.org.au/mhlc/cb\\_pages/the\\_legal\\_centre.php](http://www.communitylaw.org.au/mhlc/cb_pages/the_legal_centre.php)


 (03) 9629 4422 or 1800 555 887

 PO Box 12365, A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 8006

Provides a free and confidential legal service to anyone who has experienced mental illness in Victoria where their legal problem relates to their mental illness.

### Women's Legal Service Victoria

 <http://www.womenslegal.org.au/>


 (03) 8622 0600

 Level 10, 277 William Street Melbourne 3000

Works with and for women experiencing particular disadvantage to address legal issues arising from relationship breakdown or violence.

### Tenants Victoria

 <https://www.tuv.org.au/>

 (03) 9416 2577

 55 Johnston Street Fitzroy 3065

Promotes and protects the rights of tenants and residents in most types of rented homes across Victoria.

### Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service

 <http://vals.org.au/>

 1800 064 865

Provides referrals, information, advice and casework assistance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria.




## Advocacy

It is your right to have a say in the services that you have used or that were used by someone who is connected with you. Your experience is needed to ensure that services that are delivered are appropriate and safe not only for you, but for others as well. This advocacy is needed not only to fulfil the changing needs of the community, but also to ensure that human rights are protected. The services listed are not only funded to assist you in contributing your experiences and ideas, but also to resolve any complaint regarding unfair treatment.

## Advocacy Services

### The Association of Participating Service Users (APSU)

 <http://www.sharc.org.au/program/association-of-participating-service-users/>

 (03) 9573 1700

 140 Grange Road Carnegie 3163

APSU is the peak body for people who use Victorian alcohol and other drug services. It provides opportunities for people who want to have a say in the delivery of alcohol and other drug services in Victoria. Membership is free.

### Harm Reduction Victoria

 <http://hrvic.org.au/>

 (03) 9329 1500

 128 Peel Street, North Melbourne 3051

Educates, informs, supports and advocates on behalf of Victorian people who use drugs and their friends and allies.

Membership is free.

### Pharmacotherapy Mediation and Advocacy Support (PAMS)

 <http://hrvic.org.au/pharmacotherapy/>


 1800 443 844 or (03) 9329 1500

Provides assistance to those who are having any trouble with their pharmacotherapy program.

## Advocacy Services (cont.)

### Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council

 <https://www.vmiac.org.au/>

 (03) 9380 3900

 Building 1, 22 Aintree St, Brunswick East, 3057

The peak Victorian non-government organisation for people with lived experience of mental health or emotional issues.

Membership is free.

### Health Complaints Commissioner

 <https://hcc.vic.gov.au/>

 1300 582 113

 Level 26, 570 Bourke Street Melbourne, 3000

Provides impartial complaints resolution for people using health services.

### Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission

 <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/>

 1300 292 153

 Level 3, 204 Lygon Street Carlton, 3053

The Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory body with responsibilities under three laws:

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001
- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

# Family & relationships



## Family & relationships

Family and friends can be a strong key to recovery: rebuilding relationships, rediscovering trust and warmth, and regaining a settled role around people who are important to you.


There are straightforward actions you can take to improve or revive relationships: getting into conversation, for example; making the effort to re-establish phone contact; or engaging in activities with loved ones.

Below are services that can help you through the relationship strengthening processes.

### Family support and counselling

#### The Bouverie Centre


 <http://www.bouverie.org.au/contact>

 (03) 9385 5100

The Bouverie Centre works with families, more specifically families affected by alcohol and other drugs, gambling and mental health, to help them strengthen relationships and resolve problems standing in the way of their well-being. Their services include: family therapy; Taekwondo classes for clients under 18 years of age; and opportunities for families or carers affected by acquired brain injury and borderline personality disorder to meet.

#### City of Melbourne Family Support and Counselling

 <http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/community/health-support-services/for-my-family/Pages/family-support-counselling.aspx>

 (03) 9320 4731

City of Melbourne family support and counselling services are available to families with children up to the age of 18 who live, work or study in the City of Melbourne.

They provide counselling, social work and family support services to families with complex issues and help families to overcome practical and emotional challenges. They can advocate for them, and can provide referrals where required as well as linking families to social support and community activities.

Several group programs are also available.

## Family support and counselling (cont.)

### MacKillop Family Services

 <https://www.mackillop.org.au/family>

 (03) 9699 9177 (central office)

McKillop Family Services strive to be culturally responsive and provide support to families through a number of programs including parenting support, children's playgroups and family skills training.

They also provide assistance to those families experiencing alcohol or other drug misuse.

### Raising Children Network

 <http://raisingchildren.net.au/>

Raising Children Network is the complete resource for Australian parents, taking you from pregnancy to new-borns to teenagers. 'We offer evidence-based content you can trust on hundreds of topics about raising children and looking after yourself as a parent'.


### Kids Matter

 <https://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/early-childhood>

KidsMatter is a mental health and wellbeing initiative for children. KidsMatter Early Childhood works with early childhood education and care services to support the mental health and wellbeing of young children, their families and early childhood educators using a promotion, prevention and early intervention framework.

### InFocus Education Program

 <http://www.sharc.org.au/apsu-news/introducing-infocus-education-program/>


 1300 660 068 (Family drug helpline)

Run by Family Drug Help at SHARC (Self Help Addiction Recovery Centre). The program is run over six weeks, two hours per week and is for those impacted by a loved one's drug and/or alcohol use. It's designed to educate family and friends in how to best cope with a family member's addiction.

## Family support and counselling (cont.)

### The First Stop


 <http://thefirststop.org.au/>

 1800 778 278

Supports families and friends affected by alcohol or drug use. Includes information about treatment options, where to find support and treatment services and information about looking after you and your family.

### Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

 <http://www.vaccho.org.au/>

 (03) 9411 9411

The peak body for health and well-being of Aboriginal people in Australia. Member organisations provide up-to-date health care including:


- Sexual health
- Alcohol and other drugs
- Health promotion
- Mental health

### Mamma knows best

(see info under 'Meaningful use of time' on page 51.)

### Queerspace

 <https://ds.org.au/our-services/queerspace/>

 (03) 9663 6733

Queerspace provides a safe and supportive space to obtain information and support services aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing by specialist queer and queer affirmative mental health practitioners. Services provided by queer family practitioners.

## NW Metro AOD Family Services

 <http://www.regen.org.au/treatment-support/family-services>

 <https://odyssey.org.au>

NW Metro AOD Services offer a range of services for families that recognise both the difficulties experienced by the loved ones of problematic substance users and the important role they play in treatment support.

They offer brief and longer term counselling plus a number of group programs, as well as brief interventions and appropriate referral pathways for families involved in alcohol and other drug treatment.

Please contact the intake team on  1800 700 514 to find out more about how to access these services.

### ReGen Playgroups

Playgroups at ReGen are specifically designed to support families who have complex needs. These needs may include substance use, social isolation, family violence, mental illness, grandparents as carers, newly-arrived families, among others. The program offers an opportunity for parents or carers of pre-school aged children (0-5 years) to participate in a facilitated playgroup.

### Odyssey Kids in Focus

Kids in Focus provides a family centred approach that emphasises the safety and wellbeing of children, plus parenting and family support.

### ReGen 'Caring Dads' Program

Delivered in partnership with the Children's Protection Society, this program works with fathers who use violence to reduce risk to family members and improve family functioning.

### Odyssey Youth and Family Services

The services aim to reduce a young person's AOD use, minimise related harm and manage other problems like mental health, education, family and legal issues.

### ReGen Family and Friends Support Group

Facilitated by family members from Family Drug Help, this monthly group is offered to all family and friends of individuals who are experiencing problematic substance use. The two-hour group is run after-hours. Pizza is available.




## Telephone or online one-on-one support

### Maternal & Child Health Line


 13 22 29

### Men's Line Australia

 1300 789 978

Support for men experiencing separation.

### Men's Referral Service


 1800 065 973

### Parent Line

 13 22 89

 Open 24/7

### Post and Ante Natal Depression Assoc.


 (03) 9428 4600

## Respite and other care for family members

### Tweddle Child and Family Health Services

 <http://www.tweddle.org.au/>

 53 Adelaide Street, Footscray VIC 3011

 (03) 9689 1577

Programs and services include residential and day stay, in-home, telephone and Skype consultations, MyTime for parents and carers of children with special needs, prison program, childbirth education, parenting assessment and skills development (PASDS), parenting workshops in the community and professional development.

## Services for children at risk

### Department of Health and Human Services

 <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/>

The Victorian Department of Health and Human Services works to ensure the safety of children, young people and families. The site contains information and services on adoption, caring for children, child protection, family support, sexual assault, family violence and adoption records.

You should contact your nearest child protection service if you have concerns about the safety of a child.

### After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service

 13 12 78

# Meaningful use of time



## Meaningful use of time

After completing their rehab program, people often seek activities that provide opportunities for new experiences, to exercise their newly-developed resilience or to re-establish their connection with the greater community. Having achieved important goals, whether that be changes in alcohol and other drug use, or increased overall capacity, the need to take part in activities that complements individual interests, desires and creative aspirations may, for you be a new priority. Seeking meaningful use of time can present new possibilities, a re-discovering of self and the anchoring of the rightful place of this self in the wider community.

### Activities

#### Only Melbourne

 <https://www.onlymelbourne.com.au/>

This website provides a 'what's on' calendar for places, food and drink, shopping and sport in Melbourne. It is extremely comprehensive and has something for everyone.

#### Reclink Australia

 <http://www.reclink.org/>

Reclink Australia delivers sport, recreation and arts programs nationally. Participation is at the core of everything they do.

Reclink's aim is to improve health and wellbeing, education and employment outcomes for all participants.

Activities include sailing, shiatsu massage, singing, mindful meditation and more.

#### Meet Ups Melbourne

 [www.meetup.com/cities/au/melbourne/](http://www.meetup.com/cities/au/melbourne/)

This site is full of meet-up groups around Melbourne. You can also create your own meet-up group.

Activities include single nights, yoga, meditation, writing, dance, snorkelling and more.



## Creative

The use of one's imagination and original ideas to invent something of your very own is a means of discovering new aspects of self and the world around you. It can also be an active way of working through and communicating experiences that may be either joyful or challenging.


### Arts Access Victoria

 <https://www.artsaccess.com.au/>

This website can be used to find inclusive art programs in Victoria. These art programs include dance classes, creative writing, art studios and circus workshops. Expect payments for some of these programs, but pretty much a good variety of activities are offered.

### Wild at Heart Community

 <https://www.wildatheart.org.au/Home.htmlrts>

 (03) 9326 9970

 info@wildatheart.org.au


 Meat Market, 5 Blackwood St, North Melbourne 3051

Wild at Heart provides opportunities for people who experience disability, mental illness or other disadvantage to find their own voice through music and art.

Programs offered include song-writing workshops, visual arts and mentoring.

### Writers Victoria

 <https://writersvictoria.org.au/>

 (03) 9094 7855

 Lvl 3, the Wheeler Centre, 176 Lonsdale Street Melbourne 3000

 Opening hours 10.00-4.00pm

Writers Victoria supports and connects all types of writers at all stages of their writing careers. It offers courses and workshops, a magazine, mentorships and manuscript assessments. Membership offers discounts to workshops, courses and manuscript assessments. The cost is Standard \$75, Concessions \$55.

## Creative (cont.)


### Chairs

 <http://www.choirsofmelbourne.com/suburblist.html>

This site provides a list of choirs throughout Melbourne. Beware! There are fees - but happily some are free.

### Community Music Victoria

 <https://cmvic.org.au/>

 (03) 9662 1162

This community service offers efficient ways for people lead inclusive music-making groups and create a network of support and resources for leaders and groups. The website offers a great events calendar and you can filter by area when searching for musical groups to join. If you are keen you can also subscribe to their newsletter for free.

### Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

 [www.nhvic.org.au/](http://www.nhvic.org.au/)

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria is the peak body for neighbourhood houses and learning centres in Victoria. This site offers the means to search for neighbourhood houses in your local area. They offer social, educational, and recreational and support activities such as community lunches and computer, art and craft and English language classes. Generally there is cost to undertake the learning courses or programs.

### Australian Men's Shed Association

 <https://mensshed.org/find-a-shed/>

 1300 550 009

This shed locator will provide you with the location, address and contact details for all registered members of the Australian Men's Shed Association.



## Libraries

Libraries offer free access to thousands of books and DVD's and access to computers. They also run regular events, activities, workshops and training.

 [www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/public-libraries/find-your-local-library](http://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/public-libraries/find-your-local-library)

### State Library Victoria

 <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/>

Here, you can find information about talks, lectures, events and library tours. Search 'what's on' for free events.

## Volunteering

Search for volunteering opportunities in your area.

You can also search for volunteer support services (for volunteers – volunteer support)

 <http://volunteeringvictoria.org.au/>

## Family and kids

Want to enjoy the delights that family activities may offer? Family activities are a great way of getting everyone out of the house or reconnecting with family members.

### Where to go around Melbourne

Melbourne offers many beautiful natural spaces to enjoy with your young kids. Find great spots to walk, play, and ride or just hang out.

### Kids In Nature

 [www.kidsinnature.com.au/](http://www.kidsinnature.com.au/)

Kids in nature is for parents and their children to venture out and enjoy nature around Melbourne.

### Mama knows Melbourne

 <https://www.mamaknowsmelbourne.com.au/>

Mama knows Melbourne lists places to go, things to do and adventures to have – with kids. Subscribe if you want a personal planner emailed.

# Housing




## Housing

The idea of 'home' is associated with a safe space where one can relax, be private, have comfort. No wonder that people who experience homelessness, shut out from the human necessity of a safe private space, experience a decrease in their mental health and increase in their use of alcohol and other drugs.

Homelessness can affect anyone, from all walks of life; and it takes many forms. Whether your home life is unstable or you're living in overcrowded conditions, sleeping on a friend's couch, roughing it in your car, or on the street, the lack of stability and control is distressing and greatly compromises a person's overall health.

### Housing resources


#### Housing Crisis and General Housing Assistance

 1800 825 955

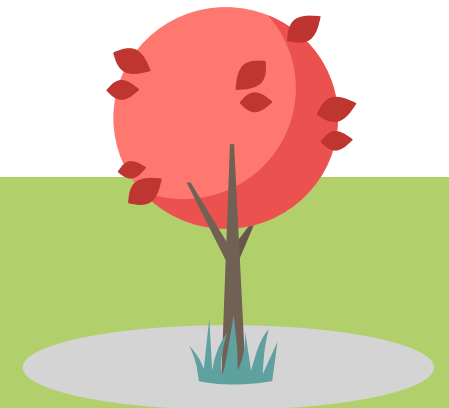
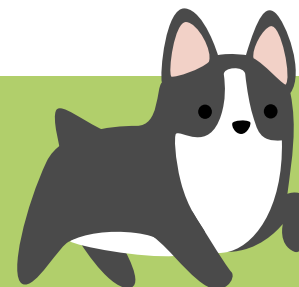
If you are experiencing housing crisis, ring this number and it will direct your call to a service closest to you, or if the call is outside business hours, it will be directed to Salvation Army Crisis Services.

#### Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre

 <https://safesteps.org.au>

 1800 015 188


This service is only for women and children experiencing family violence.



## Housing resources (cont.)

### Department of Health and Human Services List of Housing Services

 <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/getting-help>

 1800 825 955

This link provides access to housing services throughout Victoria. If you are not connected to the web just call the above number.


### Department of Health and Human Services Housing Options Finder

 <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/housing-options-finder>

This site directs you to a survey to match you with the appropriate housing help. This can include help for private renters and home owners. Here you can find a number of housing options including supported accommodation and social housing.

### Co-operative housing

 <http://www.chfv.org.au/cooperatives/>

 (03) 9654 6077

Community housing organisations are not-for-profit organisations that own, develop and maintain rental housing for people on low incomes. Click on the 'tenants' section and this will take you to an application process.



# Education and employment



## Education and employment

Job seeking is a challenge. Finding a job is a job in itself, a process that can take a great deal of perseverance and skill. Skill is needed when writing cover letters, developing your résumé, writing your experience and qualification in accordance with the selection criteria and presenting this experience in a job interview. Perseverance is needed to overcome rejection, never taking it personally and despite rejection, keep on keeping on. The more you do it, the better you become at it.

And once you have that employment position, it is important to know your rights and obligations as an employee, ensuring that you receive a fair pay and that your conditions are in accordance to the Fairwork Act (2009).

### Job resources

#### Australian Government Jobactive

 <https://jobactive.gov.au/>

Jobactive services are generally available to those receiving income support payments such as Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance, or Parenting Payment, and to those who have mutual obligation requirements. The Australian Government Department of Human Services will assess your circumstances and eligibility for Jobactive before referring you to a provider.

#### Jobsearch

 <https://jobsearch.gov.au/job>

This site can be used in your search for a job, but you can also access harvest work, the National Work Experience Program, Work for the Dole or assistance to start a new business via the New Enterprise Incentive Scheme.

## Other job search sites

The following is a selection of websites commonly used when looking for a job.

### Seek

 <https://www.seek.com.au/>

Seek is an online job seeking platform that can connect you to employment opportunities globally. It not only offers a job seeking search facility but also courses, and volunteering roles. You can register and set up your profile so you are accessible for employers and can be alerted when employment opportunities relevant to your qualifications and preferences are posted.

### Ethical Jobs

 <https://www.ethicaljobs.com.au/>

This site offers jobs for people who want to be employed in a position that help create better communities. Organisations are excluded from posting jobs if they derive incomes from tobacco, military, gambling, uranium or fossil fuel industries.

Resources that can be found on the site include:

- three steps to a killer cover letter
- five ways to make sure you don't get a job interview
- four common key selection criteria mistakes and how to avoid them, and
- five tips to overcome nerves and ace your next job interview.

Victorian Alcohol and other drug sector positions are advertised on this website.

## Employee rights


### Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman

 <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/>

This website provides information and advice about your workplace rights and obligations. Areas of interest are pay, leave, employee entitlements, and awards and agreements.

### JobWatch

 <http://jobwatch.org.au/>

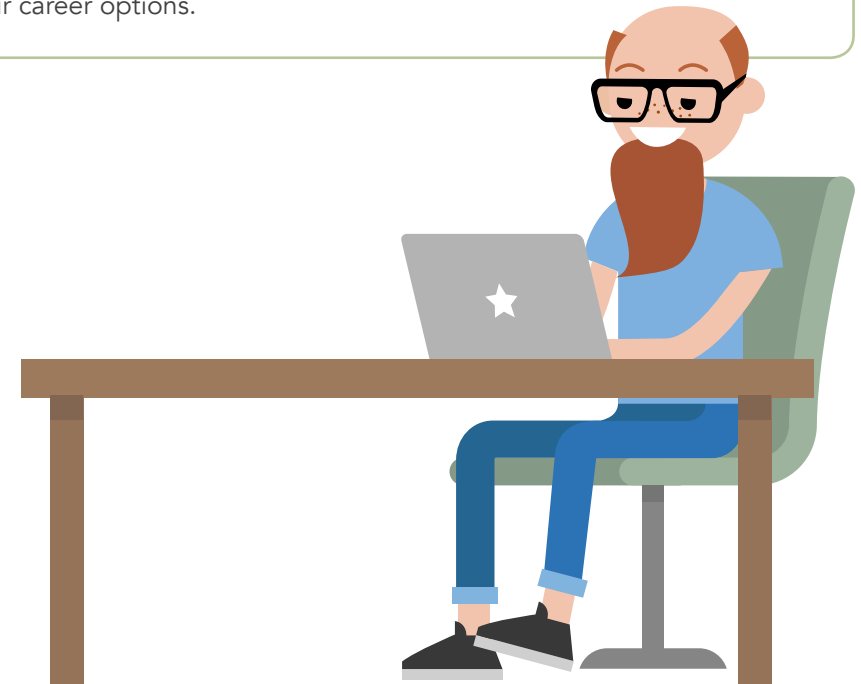
 1800 331 617 Phone for information Service

 1800 056 449 Phone for Students Work Rights Legal Service

Jobwatch is an employment rights legal centre which provides assistance regarding your rights at work.

This services provides confidential telephone information and referral services, representation and assistance for disadvantaged workers and fact sheets on a range of topics.

Point to consider: volunteering can increase your experience and boost your career options.



## Education

There are a number of ways that a person can become educated. Life experience is an education in itself: it can present you with events and situations from which you can acquire new skills and broaden your knowledge base. Formal education adds to this life experience. It can offer the means to gain new skills and knowledge, and it can also be an opportunity to add to this life experience. So acquisition of knowledge comes in many forms. Education does increase your employability, but also provokes a shift in how you see yourself and your place in the world.

### Victorian State Government Education and Training

 <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/training/learners/courses/Pages/default.aspx>

This website helps you find a course. You can search for TAFE courses or other training courses, or learn about local organisations.

There is also a list of registered training organisations that are contracted by the Victorian government to provide subsidised training.

Course levels range from Certificate 1 to IV and then if you want to advance further you may complete a diploma or go on to an advanced diploma in your area of interest.

If you want to become a counsellor, social worker, medical professional, teacher, lawyer or scientist then you will need to undertake a bachelor degree at least. Once you complete a bachelor degree you may go on to complete a graduate certificate, graduate diploma, a masters and then a PhD.

### Universities

 <http://www.australianuniversities.com.au/>

This comprehensive website lists all the universities in Australia, ranks how good these are, contains information about fees and has a search engine where you can look for courses of interest.

## Education (cont.)

### Universities of the Third Age (U3A)

 <http://www.u3a.org.au/>

If you are over the age of 50 and are retired/semi-retired, the U3A offers programs that may spark your interest. There are also groups for people interested in music, movies, cycling, theatre and much more!

### Future Learn

 <https://www.futurelearn.com/>

At Future Learn you can access free online courses from top universities.

This is a great way to explore an area of interest. Setting smart goals around completing the course can also be a great way to create routine in your life.

### Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

(See 'Meaningful use of time' on page 49.)

## Career pathways

If you are interested in obtaining qualifications in a particular area, it is essential that you plan your career pathway. To do this you will require information regarding the appropriate training needed for a particular role and also obtain an understanding of the labour market pertaining to that employment area.

### JobOutlook

 <http://joboutlook.gov.au/Default.aspx>

This website offers a guide to checking out career areas and how much this area will grow in the future. It also provides information regarding what qualifications are required for these areas.

# Finances



## Finances

Substance use can have a big impact on our finances. Given financial instability can have a big impact on both our physical and mental health, this can be an area in which people feel they are in need of support.

There are various forms of support out there including telephone, face-to-face, or online-based resources.

You can get some useful information on the internet by typing in things such as 'budgeting tips'.

When making positive changes around your finances or if you have an increased income from employment etc. it is worth considering the following:

- Can the extra cash flow be a trigger to substance use?
- What are you going to do with the extra money?
- What are the payments I need to prioritise?
- What are some changes I can make to promote healthy finances? e.g. Always open my mail and place bills on the fridge when I can see them.

## Financial resources

### National Debt Helpline

 <http://www.ndh.org.au/>

 1800 007 007

 Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm

The Debt Helpline is a free service and offers:


- financial counselling: helps you manage your debts and get your finances under control. The financial counselling is free and confidential. If the situation is more complex, the counsellors can refer you to the closest face-to-face financial counselling service.
- contact with the right service you require, such as legal services, crisis food and accommodation.



## Financial resources (cont.)

### NW Metro AOD Services Financial Counselling

 <http://www.odyssey.org.au>

 1800 700 514

Odyssey provides financial counselling for people with AOD issues who are experiencing financial hardship (including gambling problems).

### Money Smart

 <https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/>

Online tools, and information on how to do a budget, managing debts, savings etc.


### Money Minded

 <http://www.moneyminded.com.au/>

Online activities on spending wisely, avoiding dangerous debt, planning your spending.

### Gamblers Help

 <http://www.gamblershelp.com.au>

 1800 858 858

 Open 24/7

Gambler's Help is a free and confidential problem gambling support service operating across Victoria.

It offers support, advice and information to people affected by gambling (both gamblers and non-gamblers). Call the Gambler's Help telephone help line for your nearest service.

## Material aid, food vouchers and meals

Note: many services require a Health Care Card as ID; and you may have to live in their catchment area to access the service. (But if you are **homeless** or **in crisis accommodation** they may waive their policy around catchment.)

### The Crisis Help Network

 <http://www.melbourne.homeless.org.au/>

This resource has been developed by former homeless people. It includes information about various material aid and agencies in Melbourne including:

- drop-in centres
- food vans
- free and low-cost meals
- tips on getting help from services
- material aid and support services
- no-interest loan schemes.

# Testimonial

So, I've been sober now for 184 days and I have NW Metro AOD Services to thank for that. I got my wake-up call last year when I got assaulted, lost my job, my apartment, and everything I owned – I was literally left with the clothes on my back...

I entered my first withdrawal unit, William's House, right next door to ReGen, last August. I spent a week there, then went straight into the Catalyst program. The CBT training was invaluable and the sessions on anxiety and anger management really hit home. I didn't complete the program that time because I kept lapsing. But, I did get excellent AOD and financial counsellors out of it. My financial counsellor has gotten me out of all my debts and infringements and is still advocating for me to this day for unpaid back pay from my last job. My AOD counsellor has taught me to believe in myself. I am a person, not a substance; and with her help I finally realised the reason behind my previous problematic substance use.

In January I admitted myself into another withdrawal unit at Western Health, then went back into the Catalyst program. With my head injury healed, I really made the most of my time there. I completed the program, but had a massive relapse.

I came back to ReGen, and was admitted to Curran Place a week later. It was there that I vowed to myself that this was the last time, and I haven't touched a drop of alcohol since. The day after my release, I did Consumer Participation training and from that I now speak at Catalyst Information Sessions – sharing my story of how I beat an eighteen-year alcohol problem. I've even been recently published in Flipside magazine, run by APSU, in an edition about relationships. My story 'To Have Loved And Lost It All' has received a lot of positive feedback, and has helped me in my healing process.

I signed on to do Pathways at ReGen, which started in April. A unique course that covers AOD, Mental Health First Aid and First Aid. My new goal in life is to become an AOD worker. With all of my lived experience and a passion for helping others, it just makes sense to me.

I have two different AOD counsellors now: one here at ReGen, another through Merri Health. I'm one of the Peer Leaders now, and attend Peer Support at ReGen every Thursday night. A couple of months ago I completed a Peer Helper training course at SHARC which I thoroughly enjoyed. From that, I did placement work at St Vincent De Paul's withdrawal unit. It was an eye-opening experience being on the other side. I connected well with the patients there. I've been through what they were going through – feeling sick and helpless. I offered them my humour as a distraction, but in group sessions, the best advice I could give was about meaningful use of time.

I asked; "Think back to what you enjoyed, what you were good at, before you turned to substance abuse." For me, it was study and being creative. Mindfulness is a great coping mechanism when you want to tear your hair out from the 'craving demons'. I do mandalas, walk, cook, write, read, study and enjoy being surrounded by nature. Self-care is also paramount. Good sleep hygiene, diet and routine are essential to remain focused.

The first couple of months were the hardest. Lonely. I had to erase quite a few phone numbers and not associate with 'friends' that are still using. But, through support groups and study, I met new people that don't use any more. Your interests and priorities change before you know it. Yes, it is hard to fight the urges, but with the right combination of supports that suit your individual needs, it can be done.

I am a completely different person now to who I was six months ago, and I can't wait to see who I'll be in a year from now. The key to recovery is to forgive yourself, re-establish damaged relationships and learn to love and respect yourself. Even in our darkest moments, we are fortunate enough to have access to so many services to get help. All we have to do is want to change.

(Signed) B. September 2017



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