

Issues for Young People

Life's complicated. Some of the issues you might have to deal with include:

- Family changes (e.g. parents separating or getting divorced, new step-parents or step-siblings, leaving home, living away from home)
- Life changes (e.g. moving house/town, changing schools, homelessness, illness of parent/sibling/relative)
- Stress at school or work (e.g. exams, assignments, balancing school and work commitments, leaving school, career options)
- Pressure from friends, family, teachers and others to act a certain way or do particular things
- Family or relationship problems (e.g. arguments with parents, siblings, friends, girlfriend/ boyfriend)
- Bullying or harassment from peers, work colleagues or others
- Alcohol or drug use
- Body image
- Personal safety and violence
- Sex and sexuality (e.g. contraception, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections, sexual identity, "coming out")
- Abuse (e.g. physical, verbal or sexual)
- Money (e.g. debt, paying board/contributing at home, mobile phone bills, budgeting)
- Physical Health (e.g. chronic illness, disability)
- Feeling isolated or lonely.

Your wellbeing

Everyone has problems. But, sometimes things can get overwhelming or a particular issue might start to really get you down. How you choose to react to your situation can put you at risk for more serious problems, such as:

- Mental health problems (e.g. depression or anxiety, eating disorders, psychotic episodes, schizophrenia) – mental health problems are much more likely to begin when you're young
- Over-use of alcohol or drugs – if you use alcohol or drugs to cope, escape the situation or to fit in with friends
- Dangerous or risky behaviours, such as binge drinking, using illegal drugs, having unsafe sex, criminal activity (e.g. shop-lifting, vandalism, violence) or driving dangerously (e.g. drunk driving, street racing)
- Thoughts of suicide or harming yourself or others.

How to Deal

Talk about it – talking about your problems with someone you trust can help you to release your emotions, put things into perspective and find solutions.

Look after yourself – it's important to take care of yourself by eating healthily, doing regular exercise, getting enough sleep, taking time out to relax and do things you enjoy. Try to avoid alcohol and drugs, as they can make the situation worse and lead to poor decision making and judgement.

Develop a plan – sometimes when things seem out of control it can help to make a plan, listing all the things you can do. Having a plan can reduce stress and give you some goals to work towards.

Get help – there may be times when you can't solve your problems alone and need some extra help. You might want to call a telephone helpline (like Lifeline or Kids Helpline), visit a doctor or look at online resources (some good ones are listed below).

Helping others – if you know someone who is having a tough time, talk to them about it. Listen to how they're feeling and help them to find extra support and resources. If you are worried there is a risk of suicide, self-harm or violence, call 000 immediately.

Remember, no matter what problems you have, it's important to know that tough times don't last forever and you can get through it.



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Find out more

Call Lifeline – **13 11 14** if you need crisis support. Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 or visit www.kidshelp.com.au.

Reach Out (www.reachout.com.au) has a wide range of information and resources specifically for young people.

Visit www.lifeline.org.au to find a range of self-help resources and information.

The assistance of *The Science of Knowing PTY Ltd* in producing this fact sheet is gratefully acknowledged.