



Feeling stressed?

That's understandable. Separation is a difficult time for anyone.



If any of these thoughts sound like you, you may need to start actively managing your stress.

Remember:

- You may feel that separation is the worst experience of your life, but you will adjust to it and learn to live positively in the future.
- Many parents focus on their children when the family is separating. Remember that you can't give your best for your kids if you don't look after yourself, too.
- Separation and divorce are stressful for everyone. You need to look after your emotional health and well-being. Do you have support?

Don't be frightened to ask for help if you need it.



Looking after yourself

Learn to relax

- Take time out just for you, even if it is only 20 minutes a day.
- Read, listen to music or simply be still.

Be positive

- Give yourself a pat on the back when you do something well.
- Look for the good even in difficult situations.

Be realistic

- Learn to look at what you can change and let go of what you can't.
- Recognise there are only so many hours in the day.

Set goals and meet them

- Write down your goals.
- Break each goal into small steps.

Look after your body

- Exercise regularly – walk to the shops, play sport.
- Eat meals that include – fruit, vegies, grains (refer to the Heart Foundation website: www.heartfoundation.org.au)
- Try not to overuse alcohol or medications.
- Cut down or slowly give up smoking – talk to your chemist, doctor or Quitline for advice (contact Quitline on 131 848).

Who can help

There may be a time when your family and friends don't have the expertise to help with your problems, even with the best of intentions. At this point you might wonder where to turn next.

We all need someone to talk to at some stage of our life and it's often good if they are outside of our situation. The following people can help you:

Counsellors

Counselling is generally the first port of call. Counsellors encourage you to talk about feelings concerning yourself and your situation. You can speak with a counsellor by telephone (like help lines) or face-to-face (with community service providers).

The counsellor will listen to you in a supportive and non-judgemental way and offer some suggestions of how to deal with your particular situation.

Some counselling services are mentioned in this brochure. A full range of counselling services can be found in the Yellow Pages.

Your local doctor

A family doctor or a local General Practitioner can assist you with referrals for specialised help or prescribe appropriate medications.

Church leader or community elder

Speaking to a person you can trust within your community can help.

Where to get help

Nationally

LIFELINE 13 11 14 provides a comprehensive range of counselling services, both telephone-based and face-to-face, for the cost of a local call.

If you are under 18 years old call **KIDS HELP LINE 1800 55 1800**.

MENSLINE AUSTRALIA 1300 789 978 runs a telephone-based counselling service that supports men dealing with family and relationship difficulties, particularly surrounding family breakdown or separation. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERAN'S AFFAIRS

1800 011 046 offers a range of counselling and support services for eligible veterans and their families. These services are free, confidential and offered Australia wide.

FAMILY RELATIONSHIP ADVICE LINE

1800 050 321 assists families affected by relationship or separation issues.

Locally

Community based organisations provide professional counselling and support services in metropolitan and regional areas to individuals, families and children. Contact information can be found in your local telephone directory.

Organisations that may provide services in your area:

ANGLICARE services include prevention, early intervention, crisis, transitional and long term intervention for individuals, couples, families and children.

CENTACARE provides services to individuals, families and children in metropolitan and rural areas and delivers services without regard to religion, race, cultural or economic circumstance.

INTERRELATE has a network of centres across metropolitan, regional and rural New South Wales and provides a range of relationship services including counselling, mediation, training and education.

RELATIONSHIPS AUSTRALIA provides counselling programs, education programs, dispute resolution services and relationship support to people regardless of age, religion, gender, cultural or economic background.

UNITINGCARE AUSTRALIA provides services to children, young people, families, people with disabilities and older people. Services are provided in rural and remote communities.

UNIFAM provides counselling, mediation and educational services to all people, irrespective of cultural and linguistic background, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation and marital status.

Websites

www.mhca.org.au

The Mental Health Council of Australia provides information and answers on what's happening with mental health issues in Australia, and useful links to other organisations.

www.bluepages.anu.edu.au

BluePages provides information about the symptoms of depression, and contacts for people, organisations, books, websites and other resources that may be helpful.

www.reachout.com.au

Reach Out is an internet service that helps young people by giving information, assistance and referrals in a format that appeals to them.

www.justlook.org.au

Just look is a comprehensive online national database of low cost or free health and community services offered throughout Australia.

www.beyondblue.org.au

Beyondblue provides information on self-help methods for managing depression and contains a chat room and other useful resources.