

# Mental Health Through Your Life Span

At Melbourne City Mission Palliative Care we work with people of all ages and stages of life. We also support our clients' families and carers which often include carers who are children and young people. We've found that the same principles of caring for our mental health are just as appropriate for our adults as well as our young people and children.

[Mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk) give us their six top tips:

1. Talk about feelings
2. Keep active
3. Eat well
4. Drink sensibly and lots of water
5. Keep in touch with people
6. Ask for help

Strangely enough these are also the top six tips that we encourage our clients, carers, family members and bereaved to do as well.

It's good to remember that:

- Although your circumstances and experiences are unique to you, you are not alone in how you feel about them. You will find others who also feel the same way for different reasons and others who you are really close to who feel completely different to you or react in a very different way.
- It's normal to not feel anything at all... for some people that can be a relief; it doesn't mean that you don't care. Sometimes we feel numb, it's how we cope.
- Tears - Its normal for someone to have too many of them, non-stop sometimes or in the most inopportune times. Just as it's normal not to cry.
- Some people need to keep themselves busy, either in their home or deliberately outside of the home so that they don't need to be inside. Some people want to 'tidy' everything up. Pack up things, sort things out. Some people hold very tightly to feeling responsible or even guilty about something - and try to fill in the shoes of the person who is sick or has died.
- Feelings such as sadness or tears as we've said are common, so is anger. Anger at yourself, at the person who is sick or has died, anger at your friends or a random person walking down the road. Anger is another way of processing your sadness, your loss or your lost opportunities and future with someone.
- We often have people tell us that they can't sleep, can't concentrate and for some reason can't seem to make decisions. They have lost interest in things such as food, past times, sports.



If you're a friend or family member, how can you help those around you?

- Include them in social activities
- Don't make the decision for them on what they can or cannot handle. Ask them.
- Discourage people from making any big decisions or changes in their lives immediately after the death of someone they love. We encourage people (if at all possible) to wait for 12 months.
- Be aware that the persons reactions, (angry, fed up, isolating of themselves etc) is not about you or aimed at you or others. This is how they are grieving, how they are trying to cope with what is happening.

Remember here at **Melbourne City Mission Palliative Care** we have people to support you. We have one to one listening and counselling support for clients, carers, family members and those in bereavement, which can be done on site or in your home. We also have bereavement walking groups and bereavement education groups for you to share with others.

Websites that you might find informative include:

- Look After Your Mental Health Australia: <https://lookafteryourmentalhealthaustralia.org.au/>
- Mental Health Australia: <https://mhaustralia.org/>
- Beyond Blue: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

We don't believe anyone should face death, dying and bereavement alone. We are here if you want to talk.

