

Dear Valued Client,

Please find enclosed our **Co-Parenting Pack**

We understand these are difficult times for everyone and the health safety and wellbeing of clients, families and our staff are important to our service. With consideration of the current COVID-19 public health status, we have made the difficult decision to cancel many of our groups due to Coronavirus restrictions.

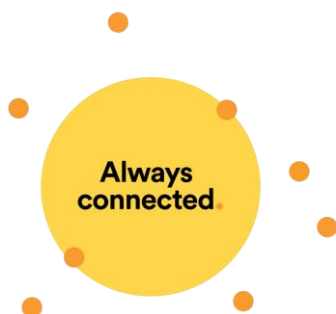
To ensure we can stay connected and provide support during this uncertain time, we have developed this co-parenting pack to help provide support and helpful tips and resources, until we are able to reconnect with you face to face.

Please know that we are always here if you ever need. Our counselling services are still available to support you and your family to navigate the uncertainty. We offer confidential online and phone counselling to support you in grief and loss, family, relationship and marriage difficulties, stress/anxiety/depression and changes in personal or family situations.

To find out more about our counselling service call us on 4254 9395.

Regards,

Roseanne Plunkett
Executive Manager, Family Services



25-27 Auburn St
Wollongong NSW 2500
P (02) 4227 1122

35A Cordeaux St
Campbelltown NSW 2560
P (02) 4268 0044

55 Worrigeer St
Nowra NSW 2541
P (02) 4428 8248

E enquiries@catholiccare.dow.org.au

catholiccare.dow.org.au

Many of us are currently going through some challenging times due to the effects of COVID-19 on ourselves, family and friends. These challenges range from very practical, such as availability of food and essential items in supermarkets, right through to health risks and emotional and psychological coping and wellbeing.

It is common to need support and it is important to reach out if you are experiencing any troubles as everyone is affected differently.

Ways to maintain your wellbeing during this time.

- Enact good hygiene practices - washing hands, covering coughs, using hand sanitiser
- Eat well
- Make sure to get plenty of rest when required
- Allow time to exercise and clear your mind
- Take time to go outside
- Have a break from social media
- Plan some simple activities to keep yourself busy such as reading a book, listening to music, watching a movie or organising the house.
- Find time to do things you enjoy and find relaxing
- Recognising the signs that make you feel stressed or anxious and putting in practice plans to help you remain calm.
- Don't panic, if you are after information, look for it from a reputable source such as the Australian Government or World Health Organisation

Sometimes it can be difficult to focus, and problems might creep up on you. Here are some signs to look out for in yourself and others you know:

- Constant Uncertainty
- Anxiety and Disorientation
- Excessive use of Drugs or Alcohol
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Changed eating habits
- Feeling of being overwhelmed

If you or someone you know are experiencing difficulties CatholicCare is here to help.

CatholicCare offers Counselling Services (with online options available) and a range of courses to help strengthen relationships.

We also offer a range of courses including a parenting course on managing **ANXIETY** in children and young people.

To book a counselling session please call **4254 9395** or email intakeservice@catholiccare.dow.org.au

www.catholiccare.dow.org.au



CatholicCare's tips and links to help you thrive.

We know everyone is pretty confused right now and that the news is grimmer than usual. We're here to offer any help we can. Read our tips to help you and your loved one's deal with the COVID-19 crisis in the best way possible.

Tip 1. Be kind to each other

We're all in this together, we might as well take care of each other. That's the most important thing at the moment.

A bit of kindness and community spirit will go a long way to making sure we reduce the harm that comes from Coronavirus. What can you do?

Join "The Kindness Pandemic" and/or "Illawarra Kindness Pandemic" on facebook

Tip 2. Read reliable health information

Follow the links at the end of the document to the latest COVID-19 information. Join the official Australian Government site on whatsapp +61 400 253 787

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

Tip 3. Don't put your mental health on hold

Isolation is only intended to tackle Coronavirus. If anything, we need people struggling with mental health to be more connected than ever to friends and support services.

If you take medication, chemists are still open and if you're out of scripts, call your doctor.

Telephone mental health services are fantastic. Here are some quality options:

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

Apps such as "Clear Fear" and "Calm Harm", "Insight Timer" and "Smiling Mind" are excellent for mental health

Refer to our support services document for more options.

Tip 4. Use home workout apps

On the couch too much? Need a distraction? Need exercise. Your mental health still needs the many benefits of exercise. We can be using apps to guide workouts (we value their expertise). Here are some suggestions.

- Nike Training Club: 105 free, no-equipment workouts and a 4 -week bodyweight fitness plan ((and plenty more)
- Daily Workouts Fitness Trainer: another similar option to the Nike app is available on Google Play and the App Store.

- Daily Yoga: yoga lovers, this is the only app you need. Available on Google Play and the App Store.

Tip 5. Video call your friends and family

We are social beings, and we need to contact with our loved ones. Get in touch and make a friend or relative smile. Whatsapp, Facetime, Zoom and Housepar-ty are all good (free) options.

Tip 6. Master working from home

- Pick a fixed start and end time for your workdays. Keep to your routine as much as possible. Switching off is more important to your energy levels than staying switched on.
- Prepare nutritious meals. A good diet is essential to your health. Use your home time wisely by making your own meals.
- Exercise and stretch. Your kitchen chair was never designed for a full day's slog. Take regular breaks to stretch.
- Check in with your colleagues. Video calls can keep the smiles and connectedness going.

Tip 7. We're still around to help

Catholiccare is still here, caring for you. We will be publishing more helpful tips and information. Visit our website [Home | Catholic Care \(dow.org.au\)](#) and follow us on our Facebook page [CatholicCare | Facebook](#).

Helpful Links:

- [Symptoms and how the virus spreads](#)
- [Check COVID Symptoms](#)
- [Seeing a doctor and getting tested](#)
- [Social distancing and avoiding infection](#)
- [About Self-isolation](#)
- [Groups at higher risk](#)
- [Information for older Australians](#)
- [Information for Carers](#)
- [Childcare & School Exclusions](#)
- [Travel Advice and Restrictions](#)
- [Where can I get Local Information?](#)



Support Services



Emergency 000

If you or someone you are with is in immediate danger, please call **000** or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.

Beyond Blue

Talk to a trained mental health professional any time of the day or night. Calls are confidential. They will listen, provide information and advice and point you in the right direction to seek further support.

[Beyond Blue](#) 1300 22 4636 Open 24/7
[Beyond Blue chat online](#) Open 3pm to midnight, 7 days a week

Lifeline

24-hour crisis support telephone service. Lifeline provides 24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention services.

[Lifeline](#) 131 114

Kids Helpline

A telephone counselling support line for children and young people ages 5 to 25 and available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[Kids Helpline](#) 1800 551 800

NSW Mental Health Line

A mental health professional will answer your call about mental health concerns for you or someone you are concerned about, including children, teens, adults and older people.

[Mental Health Line](#) 1800 011 511

Suicide Call Back Service

National services that provides free 24/7 phone, video and online professional counselling to people who are affected by suicide.

[Suicide Call Back Service](#) 1300 659 467

Domestic Violence Line

The [NSW Domestic Violence Line](#) provides counselling and referrals to women experiencing domestic and family violence.

[1800 65 64 63](#)

1800RESPECT

[1800RESPECT](#) is a counselling, information, and referral service for all Australians

[1800 73 77 32](#)

Black Dog Institute

[Black Dog Institute](#) is a free online clinic providing a mental health assessment tool and other support services.

Head to Health

[Head to Health](#) can help you find digital mental health and wellbeing resources.

Alcohol & Drug Information Service (ADIS) NSW

[ADIS 1800 25 00 15](#) - operates 24/7 and provides telephone counselling, support, referrals and information for those affected by alcohol or other drugs.

NSW Health

NSW Health have published a PDF of [mental health counselling supports](#).



COPING CALENDAR: KEEP CALM. STAY WISE. BE KIND



30 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together. Please use & share 🙏

1 Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact

2 Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you!

3 Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why

4 Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system

5 Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch

6 Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them

7 Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help

8 Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly

9 Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them

10 Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up

11 Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you

12 Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast

13 Respond positively to everyone you interact with

14 Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger

15 Make some progress on a project that matters to you

16 Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits

17 Learn something new or do something creative

18 Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity

19 Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small

20 Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself

21 Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with

22 Find positive stories in the news and share these with others

23 Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news

24 Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go

25 Look for the good in others and notice their strengths

26 Take a small step towards an important goal

27 Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why

28 Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year

29 Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing

30 Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time



“Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances” ~ Viktor Frankl



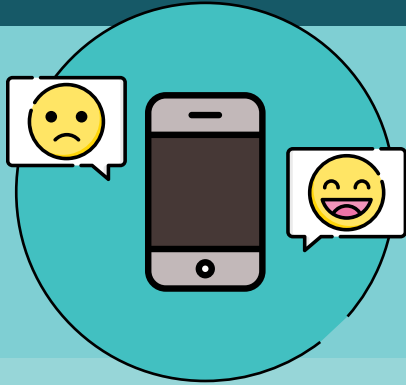
ACTION FOR HAPPINESS



www.actionforhappiness.org

Find out more about the Ten Keys to Happier Living, including books, guides, posters and more here: www.actionforhappiness.org/10-keys

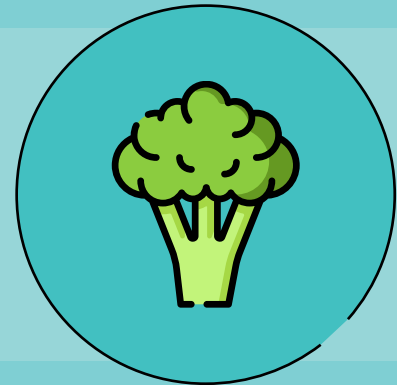
Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak



It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.

Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.

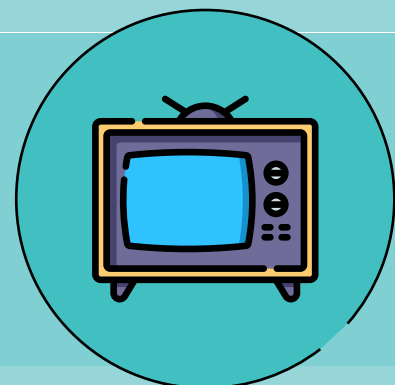
If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends.



Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions.

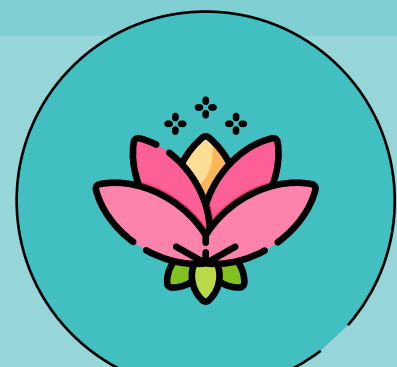
If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.

Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.



Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.

Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.





A Guide To Self-Care and Wellbeing During Times of Uncertainty.

In times of uncertainty, it is normal and natural for children and adults to respond in unique ways. It can be helpful to focus on the aspects of our lives that we can control like caring for our physical health, safety and emotional wellbeing.

“The only thing in life that is permanent is change.
Change is the one constant in life”

(Fallin, 2013)



Steps for Self-care

There are things you can do to support yourself, your friends and your family:

- **Listen** - to your needs and your own advice
- **Offer kindness** - for yourself and others
- **Stay connected** - with others by phone and online
- **Keep informed** - just enough information from reliable sources
- **Maintain a healthy routine** - diet, activity and sleep
- **Focus on the things you can control** - versus the things you can't
- **Reflect on past success** - recall a stressful time and reflect on the things that helped
- **Learn a new skill** and make plans for the future
- **Help others** - if and when you can
- **Seek support** - It's okay to ask for help and advice
- **Build hope** - Focus on 3 things you are grateful for.



You can't pour from an empty cup.

Look after yourself so you are better able to help the children and young people in your care.



Ideas to Help the Children and Young People in times of Uncertainty ...

In times of uncertainty and change, it is normal and natural for children and young people to respond in different ways. Adults can play a vital role in supporting children and young people through the experience.

How may Children and Young People Respond?

- Worried, clingy and uncooperative
- Sad and angry one minute, okay the next
- Frightening thoughts and nightmares
- Regression to earlier behaviours
- Stomach aches and headaches

Adolescents may react in similar, but different ways:

- Mood changes
- Tired and distracted
- Retreating from social networks
- Sleep problems and headaches



Helpful Hint – children and young people respond in unique ways and it is helpful to recognise if your child or young person is behaving differently.

Help Your Child or Young Person

- Offer your attention, patience and love
- Calmly listen to your child's story and encourage your child to ask questions
- Acknowledge and affirm your child's feelings and help your child to identify helpful ways to manage the feelings
- Encourage your child to ask for help from trusted adults
- Involve your child in decisions that affect them
- Respond to your child's questions with clear and factual age appropriate information
- Model positive ways to cope and prioritise quality time together

Other Ways to Help

- **Maintain daily routines** as much as possible
- **Stay social** – create ways to connect with special people and loved ones
- **Get active** – go for a walk, listen to music, sing, play with a pet
- **Be curious** – learn a new skill or research an interesting topic together
- **Help others** – encourages social connections and an "I Can" attitude
- **Plan fun activities** to look forward to

Find helpful resources, updates and training dates at goodgrief.org.au



"I think the most significant learning for children in the group was knowing they are not alone and not the only ones that experience change, loss & grief"

Companion, Seasons for Growth Program, 2019

5 Tips For Co-parenting Amidst COVID-19



As if co-parenting after separation wasn't hard enough, now parents have COVID19 to deal with!

Here are 5 tips to help you navigate the co-parenting landscape in this uncertain time.

1. Stick to your Orders – if possible

The Family Court has recently released a statement confirming that parents are expected to comply with existing Orders. However, the Courts do recognise that this is an unprecedented situation, and in some cases, strict compliance may not be possible. In those cases, where possible the "spirit" of the Orders should still be followed. If for example you have Orders that provide for a 50/50 arrangement, but the handover place in the Orders is no longer open, then provided it is safe to do so, you should continue to maintain the 50/50 arrangement, but agree on a new handover location.

If you are concerned that the existing Orders now pose a risk to yourself or the children, you should seek legal advice before you make any decisions.

If you do not have Orders in place, but have an informal agreement about the children, provided it is safe to do so, those arrangements should also continue unless you and your ex agree on something different. When in doubt, seek advice before agreeing to any changes.

2. Have a plan and present a united front

These are uncertain times for children, so the more that you and your ex can present a united front to the children, the better. Develop a plan for what you will each do in the event of particular events. For example, have a plan for what you will do if one parent tests positive for COVID19. By having a plan in place for contingencies, these will mean less stress for everyone if such an event occurs.

It is also a good idea to have consistent rules and routines in all households (as much as possible). You might want to set up a daily video call for the children with the other parent at a set time and have an agreed plan of when the children will do school work.

If you and your ex cannot agree, seek the assistance of professionals. Many counsellors, mediators and lawyers are offering online services as well as phone and video appointments.

3. Document any changes you agree on

If you and your ex do agree to change the arrangements in the short term (whether you have Court Orders or not) it is a good idea to document your agreement in a form you both agree with. This could mean sending emails or text messages with the details of the arrangements, or having your lawyers document something more formal such as a Parenting Plan. This will mean that not only are you on the same page in terms of the arrangements, but will mean future disputes about what was agreed at the time are hopefully avoided.

4. Keep the lines of communication open

At the moment, the Government guidelines are frequently changing, and an agreement that works this week, might not work next week. It is important that the parents keep in regular contact as changes happen, so they can agree as to what should happen if something unforeseen happens.

5. Protect yourself and your children

If you have fears about your safety, or that of your children, particularly if there is a history of family violence, seeking support and advice is the first thing you should do. The Courts acknowledge that in cases where there are safety concerns, agreements may not be able to be reached, and are encouraging those who think they (or their children) are in immediate danger to contact the police. The Courts are also continuing to hear urgent applications at this time for those who need court intervention.

It is understandable to feel isolated and overwhelmed at the moment. Your ex and your children are likely feeling the same way. You do not have to deal with this on your own. There are many services available to help you and your children through this time. Don't be afraid to reach out.

Story courtesy of Kasey Fox, Family Lawyer and Director of the firm Farrar Gesini Dunn.

<https://www.wavefm.com.au/whats-hot/trending/152604-covid-19-and-post-separation-parenting>

9 Best co-parenting apps and software in 2020

By [Lucy Good](#) | January 23 2020



Let's talk about the best co-parenting apps and software in 2020.

There is an app for everything nowadays. Some verge on the ridiculous yet some are incredibly helpful. For this reason, you won't be surprised to discover there are several great **apps specifically for co-parenting**.

Depending on the relationship between the parents, most co-parenting situations will eventually reach a comfortable balance. However in some cases, especially if there is tension, disagreement or non-compliance from either parent, it can turn everyday-living into a rollercoaster ride for everyone involved, especially and sadly, our children.

Children need stability, calm and security as they grow-up. And not just with the big things like **which house they'll be sleeping at**, but also the little things, like knowing their school excursion note will be signed-off. The concern of these parental jobs is not their burden and it's our role as parents to have it covered, allowing our kids to be kids.

Due to their capacity to synchronise, co-parenting apps can alleviate the need for communication about menial matters. And it's often the menial matters that cause the disagreements which hamper co-parenting harmony. So these apps can actually reduce conflict, which can only be a good thing.

Let's take a look at what co-parenting apps are available on the market at the moment.

THE BEST CO-PARENTING APPS & SOFTWARE IN 2020

OUR FAMILY WIZARD

The **Our Family Wizard** app was created by a divorced couple who were in need of better communication and sharing of information regarding their children (hat's off to a couple who can create an app post-divorce!) The end result is the most extensive co-parenting app available with an array of tools that schedule child custody, track parenting time, share information and manage expenses. It also logs communication to provide an accurate record for divorce proceedings. Part of the main Our Family Wizard website, it suggests useful resources such as counselling and divorce lawyers.

Available via: Website

Free version: 30-day money back guarantee

Cost of app: Plans start at \$99 (1 or 2 year subscriptions), bundled packages start at \$119.97

Best features: Easily work with third parties and professionals

Pros: 30-day money back guarantee, free access to legal and mental health professionals

Cons: Calendar and scheduling features can take some getting used to.

You will love this app if: You are happy to pay a reasonable cost for an app that has extensive, interactive co-parenting support and tools, which genuinely helps you to be the best co-parent you can be.

COZI

One of simplest, feature-packed apps we looked at is **Cozi**. Although not specifically designed for co-parenting, it has everything a co-parenting couple would need, and more. With Cozi you can set-up shared calendars, create to-do lists and share photos. It even allows you to store and share favourite recipes, which is handy to keep meals consistent and deal with food allergies across two homes.

Available via: Apple, Android

Free version: Yes, free with ads

Cost of app: Ad-free version (Cozi Gold) for \$29.99 per year

Best features: Free version, easy to use family organizer

Pros: Free to use, one account for all family members, features recipes and grocery lists

Cons: Occasional glitches, ads can be annoying on the free version

You will love this app if: You want something super-easy to operate which has heaps of cool features on a fresh, clean interface. Also, as it's free, you can try it and see whether it works for you and your ex, without outlay.

WeParent

WeParent is an excellent time management and tracking app designed for divorced and separated co-parents. Manage your custody schedules and appointments, send messages to your private group, and organize contacts, lists, photos and documents all from one app. We suggest taking full advantage of the 14-day free trial before committing to the monthly fee, as some users report errors that can make the app unusable.

Available via: Apple, Android

Free version: Free for 14 days

Cost of app: \$9.99 per month

Best features: Fully featured scheduling, tracking and messaging app for co-parents

Pros: One subscription for the entire family plus support team (lawyers, counselors, etc.), great customer service

Cons: Reviewers report bugs and errors

You will love this app if: You need an all-in-one scheduling and tracking tool.

FAMCAL

The **FamCal** app has a host of features to improve family connection, so although it is not exclusively for co-parents, it can certainly be used by them. It has a shared calendar which allows every member of the family to share dates, event, schedules, tasks and notes in one place. It keeps things particularly easy with visuals such as colour codes for each family member. The app is available for both Android and iOS users, and the basic version is free.

Available via: Apple, Android

Free version: Yes

Cost of app: \$4.99/month, \$9.99/quarter or \$23.99/year

Best features: Free app, shared family calendar with notifications, memos and tasks

Pros: Easy to use family calendar with useful add-ons like tasks and lists

Cons: Free app is very basic, you have to pay for additional features like text month view, shared contacts and birthday/anniversary tracking

You will love this app if: You have a large family or group to organise where lots of people need to be connected and updated. Also handy if you respond to visuals with colour.

2HOUSES

2houses offers a great suite of features for every aspect of co-parenting. This co-parenting software covers the practicalities with an advanced management calendar and detailed expense recording. It also houses an extensive information sharing feature called 2houses Journal. The idea is that even if your children are with the other parent you'll never feel far away as it allows the sharing of news, photos, videos and even those endearing children's quotes. Another nice touch is the Wish List on which you can send a photo and discuss a future gift for your child.

Available via: Website, Apple and Android

Free version: Free 14-day trial

Cost of app: \$6.49/month or \$77.88 every 12 months

Best features: Scheduling tool with finance and messaging features

Pros: One account for the whole family

Cons: Reviewers report glitches and auto-renewals

You will love this app if: You are looking to streamline the practicality of co-parenting, as well as working with their father to further enhance the well-being of your children.

CUSTODY CONNECTION

A straight-forward and reputedly easy-to-use app, **Custody Connection** is based around a primary calendar programmed with a synchronised custody schedule. It can be customised for easy viewing and has an ultra-handly Trade Request Feature should parents need to swap custody days. Avoid disputes as the app records whether requests are accepted or declined, then updates both parent's calendars accordingly.

Available via: Apple

Free version: Free for 30 days

Cost of app: \$2.99 (basic version), \$38.99 per year

Best features: *Scheduling app*

Pros: *Shared calendar, scheduling changes can be done through the app*

Cons: *Only available on the iPhone, hard to contact customer service*

You will love this app if: *You and/or your ex-partner have busy schedules that are liable to change and affect the care of your children.*

Coparently

Another app that's a hit with separated/divorced families is Coparently, which has all the tools you need to make co-parenting less stressful. Coparently features a shared calendar, journal, expenses, contacts, medical info, documents and photos. We like that you can add your kids to your account so you can communicate with each other directly. Coparently also supports notifications and free guest, child and professional accounts. This app is a great coparenting tool, but each parent has to pay separate monthly fees.

Available via: *Website*

Free version: *Free for 30 days*

Cost of app: *\$9.99 per month or \$99/year per parent*

Best features: *All-in-one co-parenting app*

Pros: *Custom calendar that improves transparency and communication for parents and family law professionals*

Cons: *Separate monthly fee for each parent*

You will love this app if: *You are co-parenting and working with family law professionals and counselors.*

Parentship

The nifty Parentship app takes the pain out of managing your children's crazy and complicated schedules. This app is for all kinds of families, including step families, commuter families, joint custody arrangements and relative-led care. We love the custom calendar feature that makes scheduling so much easier as well as keeping track of important documents and expenses. Parentship lets both parents avoid friction and communicate better so they can focus on the kids.

Available via: *Apple, Android*

Free version: *Free 1 month trial*

Cost of app: *\$3.99 per month and \$39.99 annually*

Best features: Everything you need is located on one dashboard

Pros: Lots of features, custom calendars, document tracking

Cons: You need to pay \$3.99 to get all features

You will love this app if: You're a frazzled mum who wants to streamline your kids' schedules

CoPilots

If you want more than a calendar and scheduling app for coparenting, CoPilots is for you. The app aims to help separated or divorced families raise happy kids between two homes with a variety of tools: common calendar, parenting schedule, child journal, photo sharing, and messenger. Parents and any adult caretaker can view their child's schedule as well as track contacts, appointments and messages. Users can add multiple adults in the child's circle, including different partners

Available via: Apple, Android

Free version: 30 days free trial

Cost of app: \$5.99/month, \$17.99/3 months and \$49.99/year

Best features: Feature-packed, includes messenger, photo sharing and kids journal

Pros: Multiple adults/caretakers can use the app without extra charge.

Cons: User interface could be more streamlined and easier to navigate.

You will love this app if: You're looking for a well-rounded co-parenting app that lets you do much more than just create and view schedules.

<https://beanstalkmums.com.au/best-co-parenting-apps-2020/>

Legal Information and Support during COVID 19



There must be many uncertainties and questions for co parenting parents during COVID 19. This page lists some websites that may provide you with some information and answers to support you. For specific legal advice please consult your lawyer.

- Family Court of Australia - [COVID-19 updates and information - Family Court of Australia](#)
- NSW Legal Aid – [Factsheets and resources – Legal Aid NSW](#)
- Family Relationships - [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information | Family Relationships Online](#)
- Attorney General's Department - [Family issues | Attorney-General's Department \(ag.gov.au\)](#)

These websites provide information such as:

- Are courts open and how are they operating?
- How might COVID impact the care arrangements?
- What if I want to alter care arrangements?
- Complying with parenting orders
- Child support and family payments
- Family law and school shutdowns
- Financial stress and separating families
- Options for mediation

MINDFULNESS BENEFITS AND ACTIVITIES

Visit our website to view our Mindfulness webinar series: [Keeping Calm and Connected: Mindfulness Sessions \(Webinars\) | Catholic Care \(dow.org.au\)](#). These sessions provide an opportunity to stop and reflect, providing an opportunity to re-focus, re-energise and re-connect with who we are. These sessions provide an understanding of the benefits of mindfulness as well as some practical strategies to implement.

Also see below some activities:

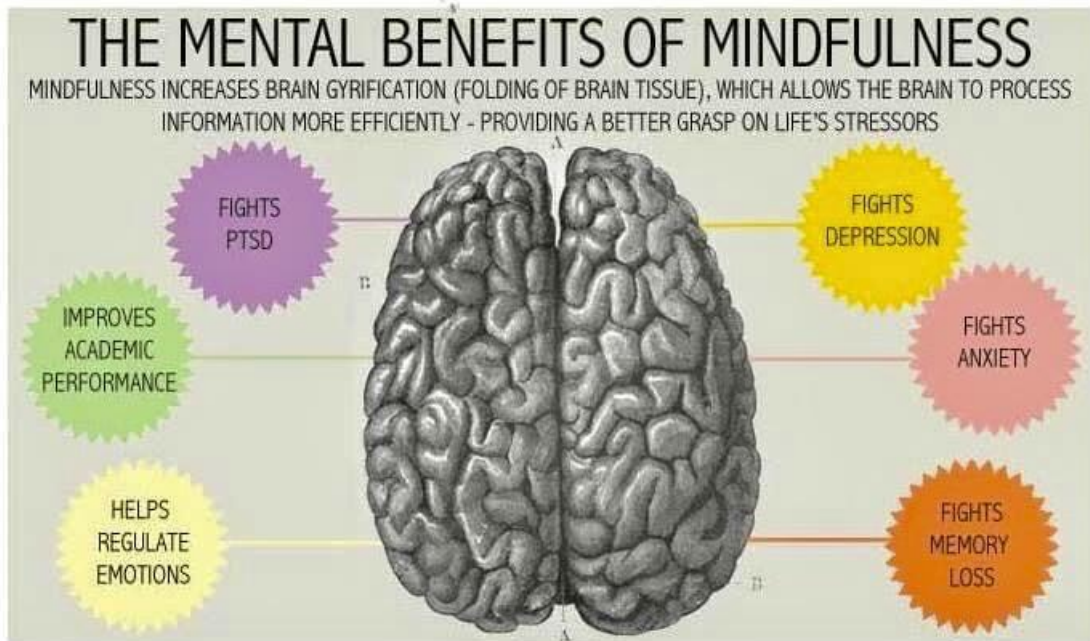
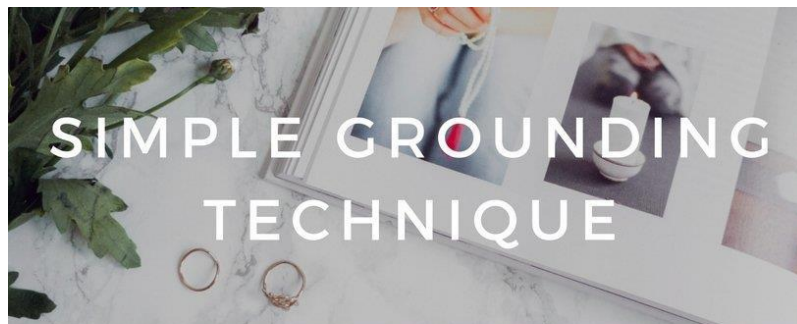


Image sourced from 'Mindfulness Works Australia' Facebook page



If you're feeling anxious or worried, bring your attention back to the current moment with this simple grounding exercise. Notice the following around you:

- 5** things you can see
- 4** things you can feel
- 3** things you can hear
- 2** things you can smell
- 1** thing you can taste

Mindfulness Activities



Everyday Mindfulness

Focussing on the here and now, will often help you to manage your anxious thoughts and feelings about things that have already happened or things that haven't happened yet.

Learning to be mindful teaches you how to focus on the present in a way that helps you get distance from upsetting thoughts and emotions. If you get distance, you can observe events without immediately reacting to them.

You can practice your everyday mindfulness skills with each of your five senses;

Vision:

Buy one beautiful flower; light a candle and watch the flame. Set a pretty place at the table, using your best things, for a meal. Go to a museum with beautiful art. Go sit in the lobby of a beautiful old hotel. Look at nature around you. Go out in the middle of the night and watch the stars. Walk in a pretty part of town. Look at beautiful pictures in a book. Go to a dance performance, or watch one on TV. Acknowledge each sight that passes in front of you, not lingering on any.



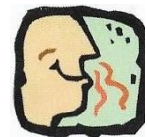
Hearing:

Listen to beautiful or soothing music, or to invigorating and exciting music. Pay attention to sounds of nature (waves, birds, rainfall, and leaves rustling). Sing out loud to your favourite songs. Hum a soothing tune. Learn to play an instrument. Listen to a chat show on the radio or a pod cast to hear a human voice. Be aware of any sounds that come your way, letting them go in one ear and out the other.



Smell:

Use your favourite perfume or spray, light a scented candle. Put potpourri in a bowl in your room. Boil cinnamon; bake cookies, cake or bread. Smell the roses. Walk in a wooded area or along the beach, breathe in and let the fresh smells of nature come and go.



Taste:

Have a good meal; have a favourite soothing drink such as tea or hot chocolate; treat yourself to a special dessert. Put whipped cream on your coffee or hot chocolate. Sample flavours in an ice-cream store. Suck on peppermint. Chew your favourite gum. Get a little bit of a special food you don't usually spend the money on, such as fresh squeezed orange juice. Really taste the food you eat, eat one thing at a time and allow the taste of one bite to flow into the next.



Touch:

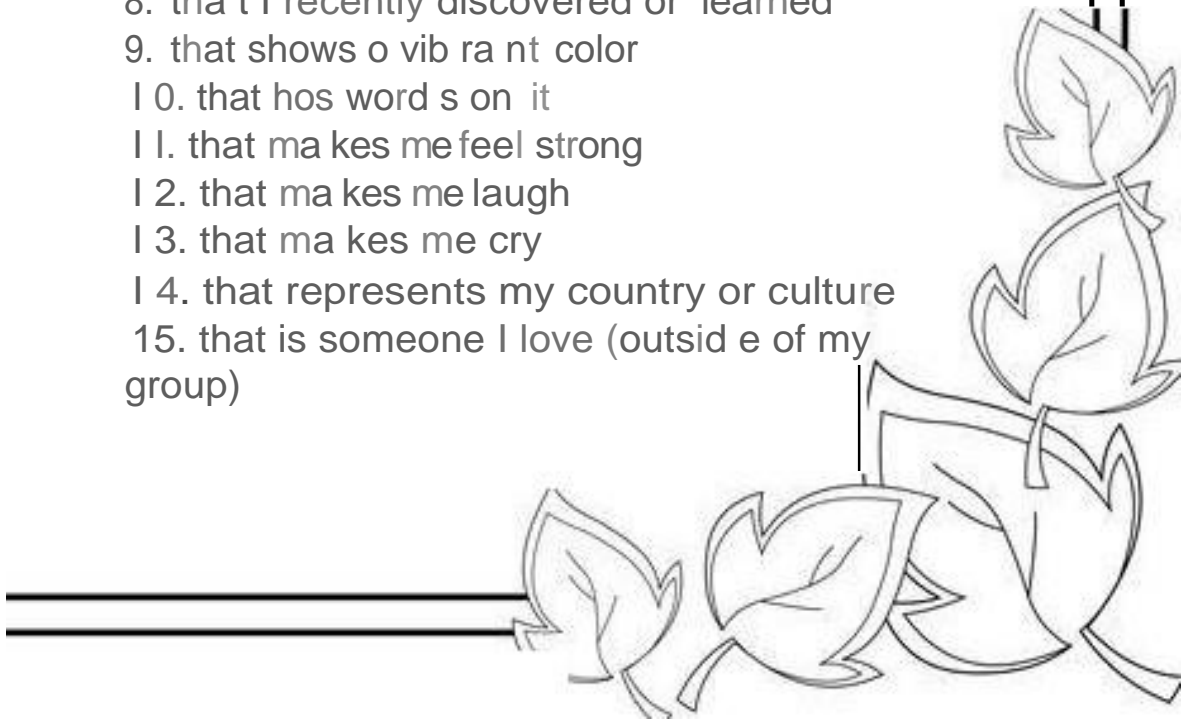
Take a bubble bath; put clean sheets on the bed. Pet your dog or cat. Have a massage; soak your feet. Put a cold compress on your forehead. Sink into a really comfortable chair in your home. Wear or touch material textures which are soft, silky, fluffy or rough. Brush your hair for a long time. Hug someone.



GRATITUDE scavenger hunt

SO F' THING I'M GRATEFUL FOR.....

1. in nature
2. that makes a beautiful sound
3. that tastes good
4. that smells amazing
5. that has been hard for me
6. that I would like to share with others
7. that is older than me
8. that I recently discovered or learned
9. that shows vibrant color
10. that has words on it
11. that makes me feel strong
12. that makes me laugh
13. that makes me cry
14. that represents my country or culture
15. that is someone I love (outside of my group)



50 Ways to Take a Break

Take a Bath



Listen to Music



Take a Nap



Go to a body of water



Watch the clouds



Watch the stars



Write a Letter



Fly a Kite



Let out a sigh



REST
your legs up
on a wall



sit in NATURE



2x
Move
twice as
slowly



MEDITATE



Take Deep
Belly
Breaths



Call a Friend



Meander
around
Town



Buy
Some
Flowers



Find a
relaxing
scent



WRITE
in a journal



Notice
Your
Body



Walk
Outside



Go for
a run



Take a
bike ride



pet a
furry
creature



Create
your
own
coffee break



View
some
ART



read
or
watch
something



Forgive
someone



FUNNY

Engage in
small acts
of
KINDNESS



COLOR
with
Crayons



Make
some
MUSIC



Climb
a
Tree



Go to a
Farmer's
Market



Let go of
something



Put on
some music
and
DANCE



Give
Thanks



Do some
gentle
stretches



Paint on a
surface
other
than
paper



Write a
quick
poem



Read
poetry

4 Ways to Boost Your Resilience for Tough Times

Article posted on www.verywellmind.com written by [Derrick Carpenter](#) Derrick Carpenter is a positive psychology coach at Happify, a website and app that uses science-based activities to help people live happier lives.

Reviewed by [Amy Morin, LCSW](#) Updated on March 06, 2020



Resilience is the ability to cope with adversity and to use challenges to forge **strength and prosperity**. Having resilience does not mean that you don't struggle, make mistakes, or need to ask for help. Resilient people keep plugging along even when the situation becomes ugly or exhausting. They learn from their mishaps and misfortunes, and they rely on others with confidence and trust.

Whether the struggles you face are traumas or everyday setbacks, being resilient will help you gain greater control over your own path and cultivate positive change.

These four strategies can build your resilience reserves.

- **Re-frame Your Interpretations**

Resilient people find a way to explain their situations in a more positive light while still accepting reality. Imagine a news broadcast interviewing victims of a natural disaster a year later. Some brood: "We'll never get our lives back." Others find the silver lining: "This was the worst thing that's ever happened to me, but this community has come together and shown its strength in so many unbelievable ways."

We have the ability to decide how we're going to interpret the adversities we face. When we work to find an appreciation for what we've gained as we persevere, we develop a more grateful approach to living. The hardship that scars us also grants us wisdom.

When all you see is negative, broaden your perspective by asking yourself, "What good has come about as a result of this adversity?"

- **Identify What You Can Control**

Optimists are among the most resilient of us, and they succeed by virtue of focusing their attention on how they can make their situations better. When faced with a challenge, pessimistic thinkers are more likely to be blind to opportunities to enact positive changes. In short, they adopt a victim mentality.

When you feel stuck or bogged down in adversity, find one thing you have control over and take action on it.

- **Seek Support**

There are many images in our culture of the self-reliant, lone hero whose personal willpower provides enough strength to withstand any obstacle.

But while personal strength matters a lot, it is ultimately a [sense of community that enables true resilience](#).

Studies of children undergoing significant hardship find that kids who have one adult in their lives who provide stability and support are much more likely to do well than kids who don't.

And relationship benefits also extend to adults.

Tending to your most important relationships when times are good builds the trust and intimacy that will help those relationships stay strong when adversity hits.

- **Embrace Challenge and Failure**

Failure is hard for many of us to take. We'd rather step back from a challenging situation than risk making a fool of ourselves. But when we adopt the perspective that challenge can strengthen us, and that we can learn from both successes and failures, we're exercising our resilience muscles.

This is not to say that we should seek adversity. But finding small, manageable ways to challenge yourself builds confidence. Take that class you've been interested in. Make that phone call you've been avoiding. Push your limits little by little and adopt a view of exploration and curiosity. Whether you soar or crash and burn, you're gaining knowledge and insight.

Identifying with the process of trying, rather than outcomes, is a resilience-building approach to life.

REMEMBER.....Everyone has varying [levels of resilience](#), but it is a skill you can work on and build.

If you're struggling to deal with a traumatic event or adverse experience, seek professional help.

Reference - <https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-build-resilience-for-tough-times-1717568>

Self-Care Assessment

Self-care activities are the things you do to maintain good health and improve well-being. You'll find that many of these activities are things you already do as part of your normal routine.

In this assessment you will think about how frequently, or how well, you are performing different self-care activities. The goal of this assessment is to help you learn about your self-care needs by spotting patterns and recognizing areas of your life that need more attention.

There are no right or wrong answers on this assessment. There may be activities that you have no interest in, and other activities may not be included. This list is not comprehensive, but serves as a starting point for thinking about your self-care needs.

1	I do this poorly	I do this rarely or not at all
2	I do this OK	I do this sometimes
3	I do this well	I do this often
★	I would like to improve at this	I would like to do this more frequently

1 2 3 ★ Physical Self-Care

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eat healthy foods
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take care of personal hygiene
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exercise
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wear clothes that help me feel good about myself
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eat regularly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in fun activities (e.g. walking, swimming, dancing, sports)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Get enough sleep
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Go to preventative medical appointments (e.g. checkups, teeth cleanings)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rest when sick
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overall physical self-care

Self-Care Assessment

1 2 3 ★ Psychological / Emotional Self-Care

- Take time off from work, school, and other obligations
- Participate in hobbies
- Get away from distractions (e.g. phone, email)
- Learn new things, unrelated to work or school
- Express my feelings in a healthy way (e.g. talking, creating art, journaling)
- Recognize my own strengths and achievements
- Go on vacations or day-trips
- Do something comforting (e.g. re-watch a favorite movie, take a long bath)
- Find reasons to laugh
- Talk about my problems
- Overall psychological and emotional self-care

1 2 3 ★ Social Self-Care

- Spend time with people who I like
- Call or write to friends and family who are far away
- Have stimulating conversations
- Meet new people
- Spend time alone with my romantic partner
- Ask others for help, when needed
- Do enjoyable activities with other people
- Have intimate time with my romantic partner
- Keep in touch with old friends
- Overall social self-care

Self-Care Assessment

1 2 3 ★ Spiritual Self-Care

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spend time in nature
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Meditate
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pray
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recognize the things that give meaning to my life
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Act in accordance with my morals and values
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Set aside time for thought and reflection
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in a cause that is important to me
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appreciate art that is impactful to me (e.g. music, film, literature)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overall spiritual self-care

1 2 3 ★ Professional Self-Care

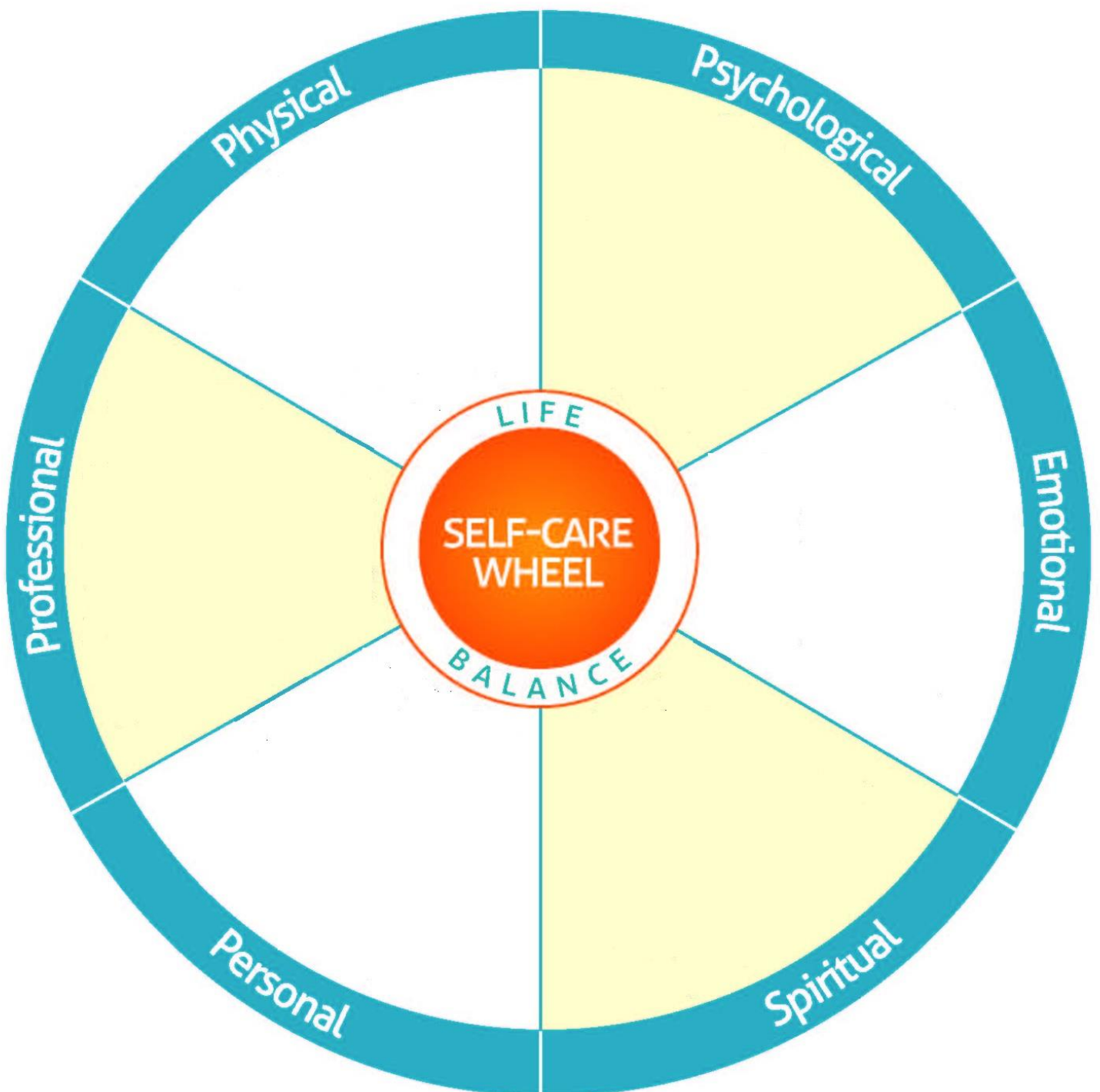
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improve my professional skills
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Say "no" to excessive new responsibilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take on projects that are interesting or rewarding
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learn new things related to my profession
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make time to talk and build relationships with colleagues
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Take breaks during work
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maintain balance between my professional and personal life
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep a comfortable workspace that allows me to be successful
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advocate for fair pay, benefits, and other needs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overall professional self-care

The below self-care wheel gives suggestion for each area of our self-care. Use this wheel as a guide to complete your own wheel. Also complete the self-care assessment included in your pack, as this may help identify the areas you could improve and the ones you already do well 😊



Use the below template to list all you have or do to look after your self-care. Another suggestion may be to use a different colour pen to write the things you would like to improve or add in each section, and work towards making them a part of your self-care routine.

SELF-CARE WHEEL





**Always
connected.**

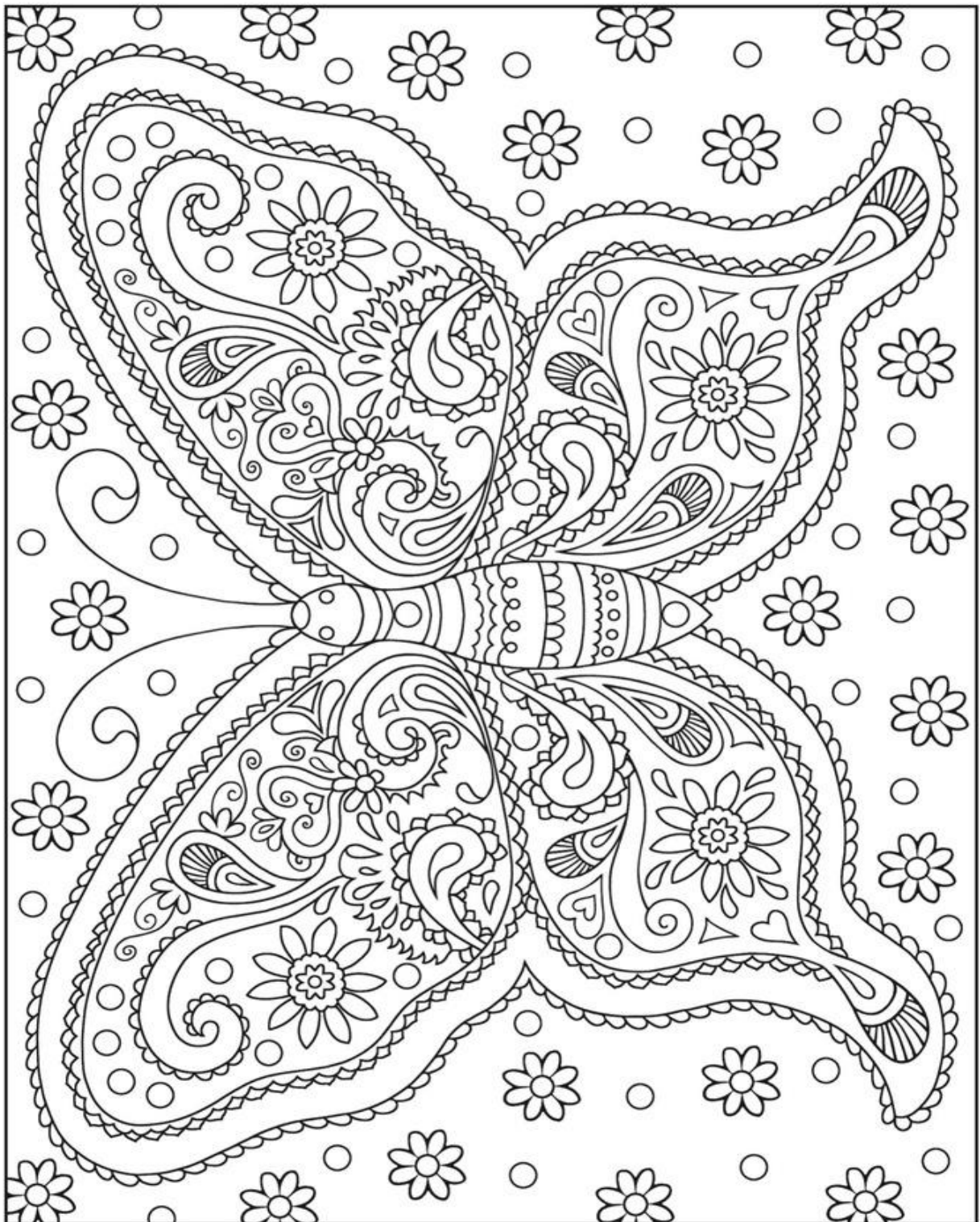
25-27 Auburn St
Wollongong NSW 2500
P (02) 4227 1122

35A Cordeaux St
Campbelltown NSW 2560
P (02) 4268 0044

55 Worrigeer St
Nowra NSW 2541
P (02) 4428 8248

E enquiries@catholiccare.dow.org.au

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