

THE FUTURE IS OURS

A teens guide to life



Western Health



“There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish”

Cover image: Ayla Beattie-Dodd, 2022.

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Introduction and Acknowledgements

This booklet has been created to support young people in Melton with information, local service contacts, tips, and health and relationship advice across a range of topics that are relevant to you. The booklet serves as a reference guide, and a starting point for these topics, you are encouraged to reach out to the services attached for further support. The topics of the booklet are written with girls and young women in mind, though the content is still equally relevant to boys and young men.

The book has been compiled and written by Sharnee Coverdale from Deakin University and Jessica Kotevski from Australian Catholic University, we would like to acknowledge the Women Making It Happen who supported the development of this resource in partnership with Western Health.

Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and Harassment are words that can be both used to mean the same thing. But there are some differences.

Most of the time, a person being harassed knows it immediately, because the behaviour is offensive, hostile, degrading or intimidating. Bullying can still make people feel the same ways, but may be subtler, and a person may not realise it straight away because bullies can be sneaky in the way they target their victims with no witnesses. To be considered bullying the behaviour needs to be repeated or ongoing, so a pattern of behaviour might need to be documented to prove it wasn't a once off misunderstanding and that bullying has occurred.

Cyberbullying

When the bully uses digital technologies to harass, threaten, embarrass or target a person or group it is considered cyberbullying. This behaviour occurs repeatedly on social media, gaming or messaging platforms and the use of mobile phones¹. Cyberbullying can be anonymous and includes behaviour such as spreading rumours or posting photos/videos online without the other persons consent, and sending hurtful messages or threats online.

Cyberbullying and face-to-face bullying often occur together. All forms of bullying have negative impacts on personal, social, and educational outcomes.

¹ Kidshelpline, 'Cyberbullying', Kidshelpline (2021), <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/cyberbullying>

Forms of bullying

Verbal

- Teasing
- Name calling
- Threats
- Putting someone down
- Insulting someone about their physical characteristics e.g. weight, height and other attributes

Physical

- Inappropriate hand signals
- Hitting, punching or pushing
- Shoving or intimidating
- Damage or stealing of personal belongings

Social

- Social exclusion - repeatedly, aggressively and on purpose intended to cause harm
- Lying
- Embarrassing someone in public
- Spreading rumours
- Sharing personal and private information or images without consent

Is what happened to me bullying?

Follow the arrows where pink means NO and green means YES



Flowchart referenced from Kids Helpline (<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/cyberbullying>)

Services

It's essential to talk to someone you trust. In emergencies call 000

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
6801 Youth Outreach 193 Barries Road, Melton – Youth Facility ☎ (03) 9747 5373 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm) ☎ (03) 9743 6801 (Fri-Sat, 5pm-11pm)	Confidential service to assist 12-25 year olds in Melton with information, counselling support, and referrals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School, work or home issues • Trouble with friends or relationships
Headspace Melton 16 Brooklyn Rd, Melton South ☎ (03) 8065 5600 🌐 headspace.org.au	Counselling and support for 12-25 year olds including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and study support • Mental health services • Doctors
Kids Helpline ☎ 1800 55 1800 🌐 kidshelpline.com.au	Free phone and online including video and email counselling for people 5-25. Free online information
Lifeline ☎ 13 11 14 🌐 lifeline.org.au	Free 24 hour crisis support service via telephone, online and face to face support groups and suicide safe training
Reach Out 🌐 au.reachout.com	Internet service for young people providing information, support and resources on a range of topics
National Centre Against Bullying ☎ 03 9697 0666 🌐 ncab.org.au	Online or in person workshops, events, articles and information for preventing and dealing with bullying

Mental Health

Mental health is a state of wellbeing that affects the way we think, feel and behave.

How we cope with normal stresses of life including work productivity or being involved in community activities impacts the way we behave, our physical health and social wellbeing².

Mental health is an essential part of our health at every life stage from childhood to adolescence through to adulthood and can impact, and be impacted by our thinking process, mood and behaviour.

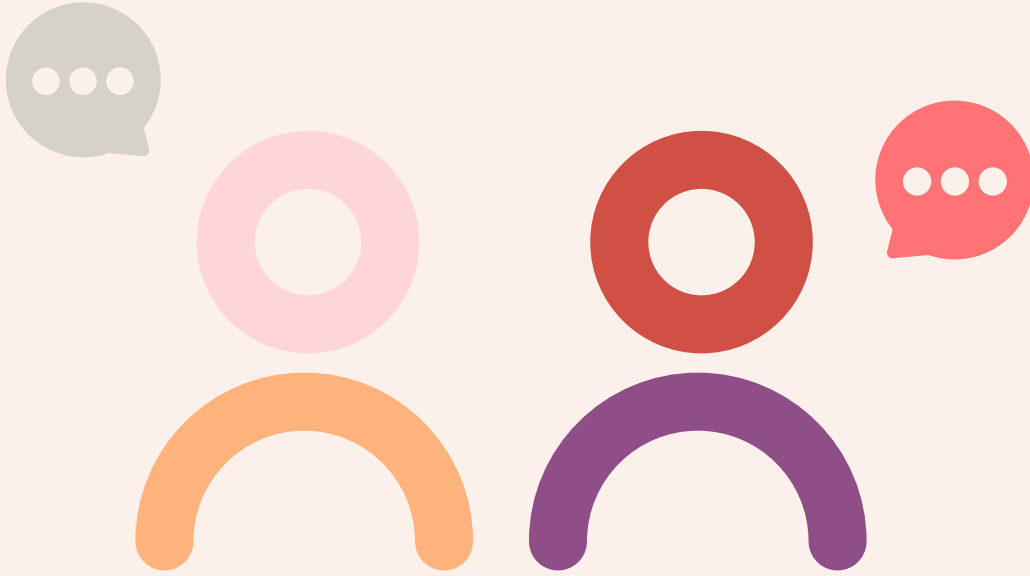
It's important to understand each individual experiences mental health difficulties from time to time as it's common to feel a lack of motivation or energy, and mood varying throughout the day. However, if you do notice within yourself these changes are not getting better ensure you talk to the correct support system and learn coping strategies best suited for yourself³

Signs of mental health difficulties

- Changes in appetite
- Constantly feeling anxious or stressed
- Difficulty concentrating
- Having negative thoughts
- Not performing as well as usual in school, university or TAFE
- Not wanting to be involved in activities you normally would have participated in, or losing interest in hobbies/ activities that normally bring you joy
- Consistently feeling sad or crying often
- Participating in risky behaviours that you normally wouldn't do, this could include misuse of alcohol and taking drugs.⁵

² Beyondblue, '3 million Australians are living with anxiety or depression', Beyondblue (2021), <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

³ Australian Department of Health, 'Mental Health and Suicide Prevention', Australian Department of Health (2021), <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/mental-health-and-suicide-prevention>



Talking to someone you trust can help us to cope when everything feels overwhelming

Services

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
<p>Headspace Melton 16 Brooklyn Rd, Melton South VIC 3338 ☎ (03) 8065 5600 🌐 headspace.org.au/headspace-centres/melton/</p>	<p>Counselling and support for 12-25 year olds including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work and study support • Mental health services • Doctors
<p>Beyond Blue ☎ 1300 22 4636 🌐 www.beyondblue.org.au</p>	<p>Mental health and wellbeing support organisation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online chat service, e-therapies and forums • Free informative information
<p>Men's Referral Services ☎ 1300 766 491 🌐 ntv.org.au/</p>	<p>Free, confidential phone helpline with counselling, advice and support to men who have anger, relationship or parenting issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and personal development • Translating services available • Online free information
<p>Victoria State Government Department of Health 🌐 2.health.vic.gov.au/mental-health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of Victoria mental health services and community support • Online free information and reports
<p>Lifeline ☎ 13 11 44 🌐 lifeline.org.au</p>	<p>Free 24 hour crisis support service via telephone, online and face to face support groups and suicide safe training</p>
<p>Kids Helpline ☎ 1800 55 1800 🌐 kidshelpline.com.au</p>	<p>Free phone and online including video and email counselling for people 5-25. Free online information</p>
<p>Suicide Callback Service ☎ 1300 659 467 🌐 suicidecallbackservice.org.au</p>	<p>Service providing 24/7 telephone and online counselling to people affected by suicide. Website includes articles on how to support others and dealing with complex situations</p>

Self-Care and Self-Respect

Taking care of your emotional and mental needs and setting healthy boundaries are essential for your health

What is self-care?

Self-care is about taking care of your emotional and mental wellbeing. Self-care activities are undertaken with the purpose of enhancing energy, promoting good health and reducing stress. Activities can vary from person to person but have the same overarching goal⁴.

Why is self-care important?

Practicing self-care is important because it can help prevent or reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. You may also find that your energy levels increase and that you are more productive and resilient with your daily tasks, this is because you are taking the time to let your body and mind rest, recover or be better prepared for upcoming activities. Because we can't pour from an empty cup!

Looking after yourself will also allow you to better support your friends and family during challenging times. Making time for yourself may not always be easy, but doing small things every day, week or month is a good start⁵.

Ways to practice self-care

Everyone will have different ways of relaxing and taking time for themselves. Some examples of self-care activities are

- Getting adequate sleep and rest
- Exercise or meditation
- Socialising, or taking a walk with a friend
- Reading, drawing or painting
- Listening to music or watching a movie
- Keeping on top of medical appointments
- Meal planning and eating well
- Staying on top of finances
- Setting boundaries - with friends, family, relationships, work, school or uni etc.

What is self-respect?

Self-respect means having confidence in yourself and your abilities and refers to how you treat yourself and allow others to treat you. It forms the basis of strong and healthy relationships with your friends, family or partner. Your values and beliefs are your own and form the foundation of self-respect, and isn't based on the views of others.

⁴ Every Mind, 'Self-care', Every Mind (2021), 1. What is self-care, <https://everymind.org.au/need-help/self-care>

⁵ Black Dog Institute, 'Importance of self-care planning', Black Dog Institute (April 2020), https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-19_Self-Care-Planning_Black-Dog-Institute_Editable.pdf

Why is it important to have self-respect?

- Self-respect helps you recognise what you deserve
- It makes you feel worthy
- It gives you the determination to fight for your values and beliefs
- It encourages good vibes and happiness
- Having self-respect takes away the need to compare yourself to others



Services

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
Headspace Melton 6 Brooklyn road, Melton South ☎ (03) 8065 5600 🌐 headspace.org.au	Counselling and support for 12-25 year olds including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care strategies • Health professionals to talk to if you are struggling with self-care or self-respect. • Work and study support
very Mind 🌐 everymind.org.au	Provides information on and resources for self-help
Black Dog Institute 🌐 blackdoginstitute.org.au	Provides a fact sheet about self-care planning during COVID-19
Untamed (Glennon Doyle) Book: Available at book stores or as an eBook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part memoir of Glennon Doyle's life • Part inspiration to live the best life possible
MoodGYM App: Can be accessed on the app store on apple and android devices	Free structured modules that focus on building resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides mental health tips • And examples of exercises
KIC POD Podcast: available on apple music and Spotify	Founded by Steph Claire Smith and Laura Henshaw. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health • Careers • Toxic Friendships • Relationship and life advice

Mind Valley, 'This is why self-respect is crucial for happiness', Mind Valley (2021), 2. What is self-respect and why is it important, <https://blog.mindvalley.com/self-respect-crucial-for-happiness/>

Body Image – Body Positivity

Media images can cause people to feel uncomfortable about their body, leading to poor mental and physical health.

What is body image?

Body image is the thoughts and feelings we have about our body. You can have positive body image, where you like most things about your body most of the time, but you may also have negative body image where you don't like either some or lots of different things about your body. How we view our own body has very little to do with how other people see us. Anyone can have positive or negative body image no matter what their bodies look like and can do. What can make our own body image worse though is when we compare ourselves to others - either in real life or in the media. If you feel like you struggle with poor body image you are not alone.

Losing weight does not equal better body image. Body image and self-esteem is far more complex than your weight. It is even more complex than what we look like. Our view of our body is always changing (which is why yesterday you loved that shirt on you and today you can't imagine leaving the house in it)⁷.

Negative effects of social media on body image

Social media such as Instagram and Tiktok play a big role in how many young people perceive their bodies. Young men and women are heavily influenced by the often unrealistic and unattainable images posted on social media. The thing is, these bodies have also been altered by filters and photoshop- the influencers don't look like that in real life either! As a result, the desire to achieve an "ideal body" can lead to a range of concerns including body dissatisfaction, poor mental health, depression, disordered eating and excessive exercise⁸.



⁷ The Butterfly Foundation, 'Body image explained', The Butterfly Foundation (2021), <https://butterfly.org.au/body-image/body-image-explained/>

⁸ Huang et al. 'When media becomes the mirror: a meta-analysis on media and body image', *Media Psychology* 24/4 (2021), 437, <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2020.1737545>

What is “healthy”?

What we see on our social media, the shows that we watch, what we see in magazines and sometimes even when we talk to our friends and family can make it seem that thinness is equal to healthiness. But just because a person is considered to be thin doesn't mean that they are living a healthy lifestyle, just the same as if a person is bigger it doesn't mean that they aren't taking care of their body.

You may sometimes hear people talk about something called BMI (Body Mass Index). BMI is a way that researchers and medical personnel calculate whether a person is underweight, a healthy weight or overweight. The problem with BMI calculations is that it doesn't consider things like the sex of the person or how much muscle vs fat a person has. So while it's fine to figure out averages across the whole population, it shouldn't be taken too seriously for an individual. For example, many professional rugby players BMI score would put them in the 'obese' category, even though they are very healthy and have a much higher proportion of muscle compared to most people. Knowing this, it's important to not pay too much attention to the scales or BMI, but instead try to eat well, sleep well, manage our stress and be active to give our bodies the best shot at being healthy.

Tips to improve your relationship with body image

What works for one person, may not work as well for others. It is crucial that you keep an open mind and experiment to find what works for you and helps improve your relationship with your body and your appearance. Some things you can try include:

- Practice positive self-talk – i.e. “my arms are strong” rather than “my arms are flabby”
- Wear clothing that makes you feel good, not only what is in fashion
- Surround yourself with people who aren't concerned about your physical appearance (or theirs)
- Unfollow people on social media who make you feel bad about yourself
- Catch yourself out when you think poorly about your body
- Write a list of things you love about yourself that are completely unrelated to how you look
- Do things that you enjoy, that make you feel great, or that you are good at
- Be aware of the messages that the media is giving you – avoid ones that say you need to change who you are
- Accept that it takes time to unlearn the messages that society pushes about our bodies



⁹ The Butterfly Foundation, 'Eating disorders explained', The Butterfly Foundation (2021), 4. What are the different types of eating disorders, <https://butterfly.org.au/eating-disorders/eating-disorders-explained/>

Eating disorders

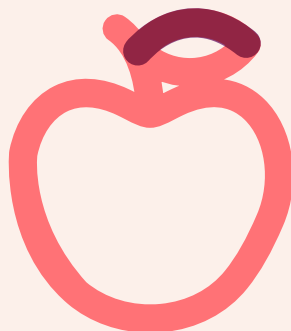
Eating disorders can affect people of all ages but predominantly affect young men and women aged 12-25 years. Eating disorders are a group of mental health conditions that if left untreated can severely affect your physical health and causes distress for both you and your loved ones. Types of eating disorders include:

- **Anorexia Nervosa** – Characterised by restrictive eating, excessive exercise, a fear of gaining weight, disturbed body image.
- **Bulimia Nervosa** – Involves binge eating which is often followed by compensatory behaviours (commonly vomiting) to avoid gaining weight.
- **Binge Eating Disorder** – Involves eating a lot of food in a small amount of time and feeling a loss of control whilst eating.
- **Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake disorder** – Characterised by selective patterns of eating and limiting the amount or types of foods that you eat¹⁰.

Warning signs for eating disorders

Every person will experience an eating disorder differently, but these are some of the common warning signs and symptoms that may help recognise an eating disorder in a friend or yourself.

Physical	Psychological	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rapid weight loss or fluctuations• Loss of or irregular periods• Decreased sex drive• Fainting or dizziness• Constant feeling of tiredness or poor sleeping• Low energy• Feeling cold all the time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling anxious around meal times• Distorted body image• Using foods as a source of comfort (binge eating)• Using food or lack of food as self-punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoiding eating out with friends or family• Compulsive or excessive exercising• Change in food preferences• Obsessive rituals around eating or preparation of food• Extreme sensitivity to comments about appearance or eating and exercise habits



¹¹ National Eating Disorder Association, 'Warning signs and symptoms', National Eating Disorder Association (2021), 2. Common symptoms of an eating disorder, <https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/warning-signs-and-symptoms>

¹² The Butterfly Foundation, 'Eating disorders explained', The Butterfly Foundation (2021).

Benefits of beating your eating disorder

Overcoming an eating disorder is a long process that often takes help from professionals and support from loved ones. But the benefits of beating an eating disorder result in your life no longer being controlled by obsessing over what your body looks like and what you can and can't eat. This means that you have more brain space to have better relationships with the people you care about and you'll be better able to cope with stress. Also, by being able to eat a normal diet again, your energy levels will bounce back allowing you to do many more of the things you enjoy¹²

Eating a balanced diet

Our body image and weight should not be the focus for wanting to eat well. Eating a wide variety of nutritious foods has many benefits, like giving us the energy needed for daily life, supporting our immune systems so we don't get sick as often and longer term protecting us from obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, some types of cancer and skeletal conditions. It is important that the choices we make in the food we eat are for the right reasons, informed by evidence, and not because we want to look a certain way. To find out more about eating a balanced diet you can speak to a dietitian or visit

- Eat For Health - www.eatforhealth.gov.au
- Better Health Channel - <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/healthyliving/healthy-eating>

Services

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
The Butterfly Foundation ☎ 1800 33 4673 🌐 butterfly.org.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online support for eating disorders and body image issues • Treatment services
Balance Psychology Melton 95 Unit Street, Melton	Adolescent psychology services with a focus on eating difficulties and self-esteem issues
Be You (Beyond Blue) 🌐 beyou.edu.au	Body image resources and fact sheets
Headspace Melton 6 Brooklyn road, Melton South ☎ (03) 8065 5600 🌐 headspace.org.au	Support and resources for young people regarding eating disorders
Dietitian Melton Health, 195-209 Barries Road, Melton West ☎ 03 9747 7609	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy eating advice • Eating disorder recovery • Weight management • Body image • Appetite awareness
Feed your instinct 🌐 feedyourinstinct.com.au	Interactive online toolkit to support young people with body image and eating disorders
Eating Disorders Victoria ☎ 1300 550 236 🌐 eatingdisorders.org.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact sheets • How to recover from eating disorders • Support services • Information for family and friends
Kurunjang Community Hub - Teaching Kitchen 33 Mowbray Crescent, Kurunjang ☎ 03 9747 7339 🌐 meltonlearning.com.au	Cooking classes and food handling courses are available. Check the website to see what courses and events are coming up.

Consent and Respectful Relationships

A respectful relationship is one of shared respect, trust, good communication, understanding and honesty.

Consent within a relationship

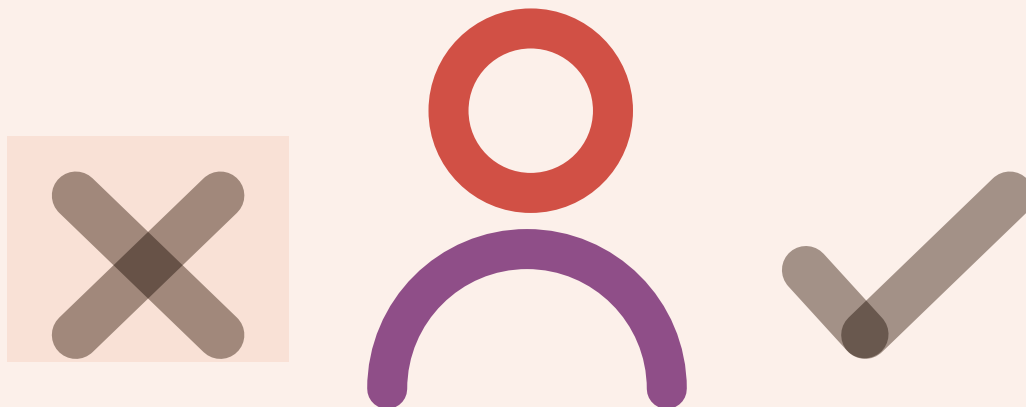
Consent is an important part of healthy relationships and is a sign of respect. Within a respectful relationship, mutual agreement is required around what is acceptable. Thinking about physical contact - this includes kissing, hugging, touching or sex. Just because someone consents to something once, does not mean they will always consent. Feeling safe and comfortable is important for everyone within their relationships.¹³ You do not need to give a reason or justification to withdraw consent, it can be done at any time, by either partner.

We often talk about consent with intimate partners, but it's important to recognise that this applies to contact with all people, not just those we are dating or with whom we are romantically involved.

Questions to ask for consent within a relationship

- Are you happy with this?
- Are you comfortable?
- Do you want to continue?
- What would you like?
- I would like to do this, is that okay?

Enthusiastic consent means that you and your partner are participating in sexual acts because you're excited about it, not because you feel pressured into it. If it's not an enthusiastic yes, then it's a **NO**. You always have the right to say no and change your mind at any time regardless of the person you're with.¹⁴



¹³ Reach Out, '5 things you need to know about sexual consent', Reach Out (2020), <https://au.reachout.com/articles/5-things-you-need-to-know-about-sexual-consent>

¹⁴ Kidshelpline, 'What is Consent?', Kidshelpline (2021), <https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/what-consent>

Signs/signals for consent and non-consent

Signs/signals for consent:

Verbal	Non-verbal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes • I'd like to... • I want to keep doing this • Noises of enjoyment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head nod • Smiling • Moving closer physically • Reciprocating touch

Signs/signals for when there is no consent:

Verbal	Non-verbal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • I want to stop • I have changed my mind • I'm not comfortable • Changing the subject ('let's just watch the movie') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent/Saying nothing • Pushing away • Avoiding touch/not touching you • Turning their body away from you • Freezing or doing nothing

Services

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
1800Respect ☎ 1800 737 732 🌐 1800respect.org.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone and Web chat counselling • Safety planning • Support and information on domestic and family violence • Support and information on sexual violence and assault
Respect Victoria ☎ 1300 800 333 🌐 respectvictoria.vic.gov.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on community respect • Focus on family violence
Lifeline ☎ 13 11 44 🌐 lifeline.org.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 crisis support phone line • Lifeline text: 0477 13 11 14 available nightly • Online chat: available nightly • Counselling face to face • Support groups • Free online information
GenWest ☎ 9689 9588 🌐 genwest.org.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's counselling services • Counselling for Women • My Safety Plan Booklet • Parent Information Kit • Crisis services for culturally and linguistically diverse women brochure
Men's Referral Services ☎ 1300 766 491 🌐 ntv.org.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and personal development • Available translating service • Online free information

Sexual and Reproductive Health

Good sexual health and behaviour is important for respectful nurturing relationships, mental and physical health.

What is sexual and reproductive health?

Good sexual and reproductive health is important for your overall health and wellbeing. It includes engaging in healthy relationships, having access to safe and appropriate health services and having the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions about your sexual choices to protect yourself and others¹⁵. Practicing safe sex can help reduce your chance of infection or an unwanted pregnancy.

Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's)

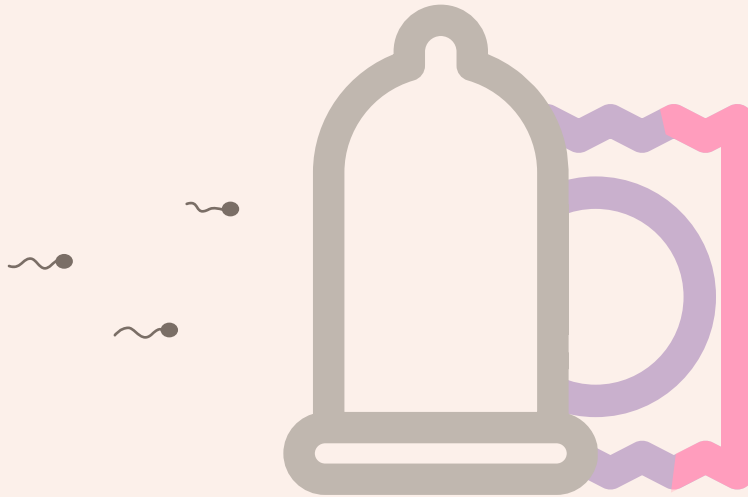
STI's are a group of infections that are passed on to people during sexual contact. Some of the most common infections include gonorrhoea, chlamydia, genital herpes and genital warts. Most STI's are treatable and are not a reflection on the individual as anyone can catch an STI. It is important that if you suspect you have an infection that you speak with your doctor to have a screening and, if the test comes back positive for an infection, that you notify your previous and

current partner(s). The only way to know for sure if you have an STI is to speak to your doctor. Common symptoms to look out for include:

- Unusual discharge from the vagina, penis or anus
- Pain when urinating
- Lumps or skin growths around the genitals or anus
- Rash
- Unusual vaginal bleeding
- Itchy genitals or anus
- Blisters, sores or warts around your genitals or anus

To reduce your chances of contracting an STI, use barriers such as condoms or dental dams (a thin sheet of latex placed over the genitals or anus for oral sex) to prevent skin to skin contact on areas where STI's may occur. It's also important to get regular STI checks, especially before having sex with a new partner to reduce the risk of spreading STIs.

¹⁵ Victoria State Government, 'Why improving sexual and reproductive health is important for health and wellbeing', [health.vic, https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/public-health-wellbeing-plan/sexual-and-reproductive-health-guidance](https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/health-strategies/public-health-wellbeing-plan/sexual-and-reproductive-health-guidance)



How often should you get check-ups?

What	Why	How often
Ovarian cancer screening (formerly pap smear)	To look for changes that may indicate ovarian cancer	First test at 25 and then as your doctor advises
Sexually transmissible infection check	To screen for STIs	Yearly if you are sexually active and more frequently if you are having sex with a new partner or a change in partners
Reproductive health check	To check for factors that may prevent you having children	When you are trying to have a baby
Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination	To protect you from HPV and reduce your risk of cervical, penile, anal and throat cancer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually given at ages 12-13 • Two injections, 6-12 months apart¹⁶

¹⁶ Jean Hailes, 'Health checks women under 20', Jean Hailes for women's health (2021), <https://www.jeanhailes.org.au/health-a-z/health-checks/women-under-20>

Contraception Options

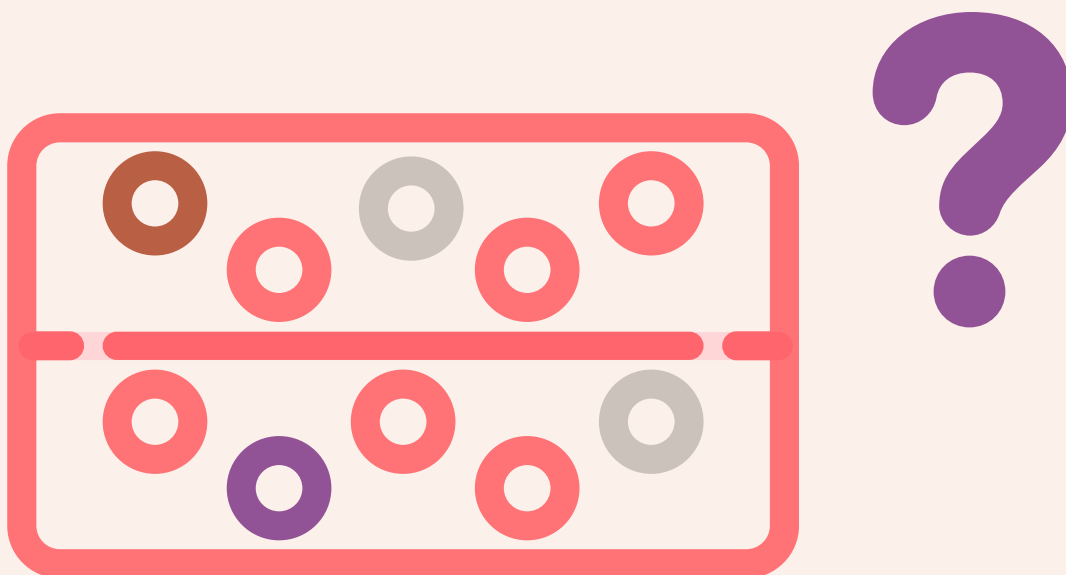
There are many different contraceptives to avoid pregnancy. Always consult a health practitioner to make the right choice for you. Methods other than using a condom do not offer protection from sexually transmissible infections so it is important to still use barrier protection. Contraception methods include:

- **Barrier methods:** such as condoms that stop semen from entering the vagina.
- **Hormonal pills that are taken daily:** Combined oral contraceptive pill ('The pill') or Progestogen-only pill ('The mini pill')
- **Nuvaring:** A soft plastic ring containing hormones inserted into the vagina for 3 weeks, removed for 1 week and then a new one is inserted
- **Implanon ('The Rod'):** a matchstick sized piece of plastic, inserted in the arm containing hormones that are released at a low dose, lasts for 3 years
- **Intrauterine Devices:** inserted into the uterus for long lasting contraception. Mirena (7 years), Copper IUD (up to 10 years)

- **Natural family planning method:** relies on a woman understanding her fertility cycle to know when she is ovulating to avoid pregnancy (the couple may use condoms during ovulation). Some women choose this method due to religious or cultural reasons, or to avoid the additional hormones that are part of other methods but it has a higher failure rate than other methods.

Emergency Contraception

Postinor emergency contraception (The 'morning after pill') can be purchased at a pharmacy and does not require a prescription from a doctor or permission from a parent or guardian¹⁷. It's used when your first method of contraception has failed (the condom broke, forgot to take the pill etc) and should be taken within 72 hours of the sexual encounter to prevent pregnancy.



¹⁷ Jean Hailes, 'Contraception', Jean Hailes for women's health (2021), 2. Contraception options.

Safe sex for LGBTQI young people

If you are worried about having sex with someone of the same gender, take things slowly and experiment together. Anyone can get an STI so most broader protective measures do not differ significantly from heterosexual couples. This includes ensuring you're practising safe sex by using a condom or dental dam during oral, vaginal or anal sex, washing your hands before and after sex, cleaning any sex toys, and avoid oral sex if either you or your partner have cuts or sores on your lips or mouth. HIV still disproportionately impacts LGBTQI people so it is important to have regular checks¹⁸. Pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) is a medication that an HIV-negative person can take daily to reduce their risk for contracting HIV while being sexual with an HIV-positive person.

For detailed information on sexual health for LGBTQI people there is a comprehensive guide that has been developed by Healthline in the US: <https://www.healthline.com/health/lgbtqia-safe-sex-guide> and by the LGBT Foundation in the UK: <https://lgbt.foundation/sexguides>

Menstruation

Every body is different, but menstruation is a healthy and natural part of a person who menstruates' life. There are many options on how to deal with period blood such as using pads, tampons or a menstruation cup. Try different methods to find the one that works best for you, and raise questions or concerns if not sure by speaking to someone you trust.

Some may experience cramping worse than others. Using heating pads, pain relief medication, drinking more water, gentle exercising such as yoga or walking can help relieve pain. Whilst some pain is normal during a period, a lot of pain may indicate a condition such as endometriosis or polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) requiring treatment to manage symptoms. Speak to your doctor if you have concerns, and if you are not satisfied, seek a second and third opinion as conditions can go undiagnosed for years¹⁹

¹⁸ NHS, 'Sexual health for lesbian and bisexual women', NHS (17 Jul. 2019), 2. Tips for safer sex with women, <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sexual-health/sexual-health-for-lesbian-and-bisexual-women/>

¹⁹ TeensHealth, 'All about Periods', TeensHealth (2018), <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/menstruation.html>

Services

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
Bacchus Marsh Community Health Centre 35 Grant street, Bacchus March ☎ (03) 5367 9674	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's and men's health • Sexual and reproductive health education • Cervical screening appointments available
Gynaecologist at Western Specialist Centre 131 Main Rd W. St Albans ☎ (03) 8001 7170	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family planning and contraception • STI check-ups and information • Endometriosis and polycystic ovary syndrome services • Sexual dysfunction • Bisexual and same sex relationship services
Family Planning Victoria 📍 fpv.org.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contraception options and STI information • Abortions • Pregnancy
Share the dignity Melton South Community Centre, 41 Exford Rd, Melton South Vic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to free menstrual products from the vending machine in the women's bathroom • Includes 6 tampons and 2 pads
Jean Hailes for Women's Health 📍 jeanhailes.org.au	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on common health issues effecting women's sexual and reproductive health • Period information

Family Violence

Family violence can occur to anyone in any relationship, including couples, family members, and against people who are elderly or disabled.

What is family/ domestic violence?

Family violence or domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour that involves taking control over another person. It is done on purpose and the severity and frequency of the incidents often increase over time. It can include, physical, verbal, sexual, emotional or psychological abuse, isolation and financial abuse.²⁰

Recognising the signs of family violence

Noticing the signs of family violence can often be difficult, as they are not as obvious as people may think. If you feel unsafe or recognise any of the following signs below, please seek help.

- Your partner controls your money
- Your partner cuts you off from your family or friends
- You're afraid to say no to your partner
- You feel pressured into doing sexual things
- Your partner constantly checks up on what you are doing
- Your partner threatens to hurt you or has physically hurt you before²¹

It's important to know that just because a person hasn't physically hurt you, doesn't mean that they aren't committing domestic violence. If they are acting in a way that controls your actions and behaviours, then this could be considered abusive and you should seek help. Don't wait for it to get worse.

For more information on the signs of physical and non-physical domestic violence, Reachout Australia have written a helpful article: <https://au.reachout.com/articles/signs-of-an-abusive-relationship>

Prevalence of domestic violence

Domestic violence poses significant threats to individual health and welfare, and whilst domestic violence can affect both men and women, women are predominantly the victims²². As of November 2021 there were approximately 3,088 reports of family/ domestic violence incidents in Melton, an increase of 7.6% since 2020 (2,870 incidents) which accounted for 30% of all criminal incidents in the municipality.

²⁰ Relationships Australia NSW, 'Recognising the warning signs of domestic violence' Relationships Australia NSW (2021), 2. Defining domestic and family violence, <https://www.relationshipsnsw.org.au/recognising-warning-signs-of-domestic-violence/>

²¹ Relationships Australia NSW, 'Recognising the warning signs of domestic violence' Relationships Australia NSW (2021), 3. Warning signs you're experiencing domestic or family violence.

²² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 'Family, domestic and sexual violence in Australia, AIHW (5 Jun. 2019), <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/domestic-violence/family-domestic-sexual-violence-australia-2019/contents/summary>

What can you do to help prevent violence against women?

- Challenge the condoning of violence against women
- Speak out against racist, sexist and homophobic jokes
- Fight against the stereotyped constructions of masculinity and femininity
- Help to raise awareness towards women and male peer relations that emphasise aggression
- Recognise the signs of domestic violence²⁴
- Provide support to victims/survivors of domestic violence

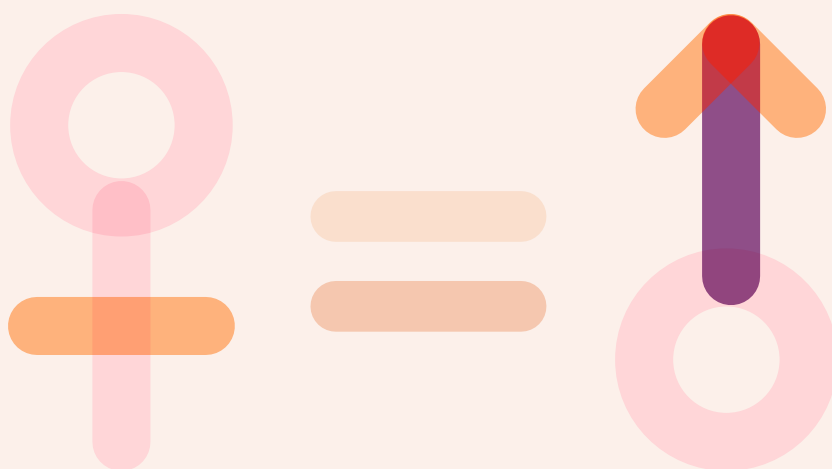
Boys can like pink, girls can like trucks: Why how we label things matters

In our society, different activities, behaviours, jobs, clothes, colours and an endless list of other things have been labelled as either 'masculine' (seen as manly) or 'feminine' (seen as womanly). A lot of these things don't make any sense, such as 'women belong in the kitchen' when cooking is an essential skill that everyone should master. Sometimes it's connected to what is seen as traditional roles: Men go to work to earn money and Women take care of the family

and the home duties. Girls are sweet and boys are rough. Little girls get dolls, boys get trucks. Teen girls like make-up, teen boys play sports etc. We know in the modern era that this isn't the case and people of all genders should have the opportunity to do whatever they like, but these opinions are still unfortunately quite common.

This attitude means that when someone doesn't want to conform to what is expected of their gender they can find that they get pressured from those around them to be more aligned with what others think they should do and like. This can be particularly obvious with 'feminine' activities, which can be seen as 'lesser' than masculine, and when certain behaviours and activities are seen as 'lesser', it's more likely that they won't be valued as highly even though they are all important and the person who is doing the feminine activity can be harassed (especially if it's a male). What does this have to do with domestic violence? This attitude disrespects femininity, and whilst all disrespect doesn't lead to violence, all violence starts from disrespect.

That to 'be a girl' or do something 'like a girl' is still seen as an insult, says we still have a way to go. We need to ask questions about why some things are seen as more valuable hobbies or pursuits than others.



²³ Crime Statistics Agency, 'Crime by location – Family Violence Dashboard' (2021), <https://www.crimestatistics.vic.gov.au/crime-statistics/latest-crime-data-by-area>

Services

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
Victoria Police ☎ 000	If you are in immediate harm from family or domestic violence.
1800 Respect ☎ 1800 737 732 📧 1800respect.org.au	Sexual assault, and family violence counselling 24 hour service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and support • Connection to appropriate services
Good Shepherd Brimbank and Melton Family Violence Services 354 Main Road West, St Albans ☎ (03) 8312 8800 📧 stalbans@goodshep.org.au	Specialist family violence recovery, crisis and housing service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency housing • Family violence recovery support groups • Connection to legal services, counselling, financial assistance
GenWest 317-319 Barkly St, Footscray ☎ (03) 9689 9588 📧 genwest.org.au	A specialist family violence centre for Women. They deliver family violence services and undertake health promotion actions.
Melton City Council Family Services Unit 232 High St, Melton ☎ (03) 9747 7200 📧 familyservices@melton.vic.gov.au	Melton City Council support service providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General domestic and family violence information • Counselling • Referral services
Safe Steps Family Violence Response Centre ☎ 1800 015 188 📧 safesteps.org.au 📧 safesteps@safesteps.org.au	24 hour family violence response centre providing specialist support services to people experiencing or afraid of family violence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone line and email that provides support to seek safety from domestic violence 24/7 • Web chat available Mon-Fri, 9am - midnight
InTouch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence ☎ 1800 755 988 📧 intouch.org.au	Free and confidential support services to migrant and refugee women living in Victoria. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and legal support on family violence • Referrals and information in various languages
Domestic Violence Resource Centre Victoria ☎ (03) 8346 5200 📧 dvrcv.org.au	Resource centre supporting workers and families to help stop family violence. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, help and advice • Knowing your legal rights • Technology and domestic violence
Men's referral services ☎ 1300 766 491 📧 ntv.org.au	Services for males at risk of using family violence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselling • Behaviour change and anger management
Who's okay at home? 📧 woah.org.au	Provides information to help young people understand domestic violence, how to recognise it and help others

Alcohol and Drugs

The misuse of alcohol and drugs can negatively impact individuals, families and communities

Alcohol is a drug that when consumed affects a person's ability to think rationally and have correct judgement, leading to slurred speech, uncoordinated movements and inability to react on time.²⁵

Drugs are a substance that can alter an individual's mental or physical state, this affects the way the brain works, your behaviour and understanding as well as your senses.

Drugs can be categorised as:

- Depressants: slows down the function of the nervous system
- Hallucinogens: can alter a person's perception of reality from hearing, taste and smell
- Stimulants: speeds up the function of the nervous system

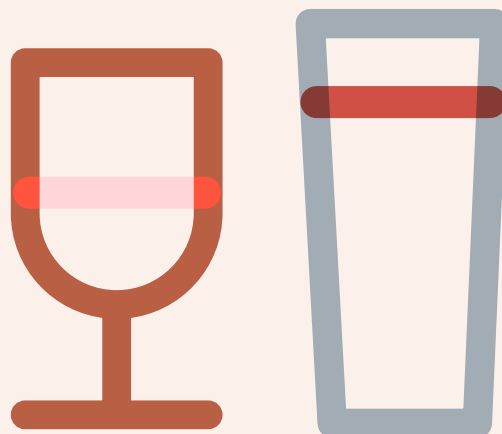
A person may continue to take drugs even when they don't want to because drugs can be very addictive.

There are a range of dangers and health complications both short and long term with all kinds of drugs. Abuse of alcohol and other drugs can lead to addiction, overdose, and can be harmful during pregnancy. Medications or pharmaceuticals are also drugs.

The amount of a drug needed to cause an overdose varies. It depends on how tolerant a person is to the drug, how pure the drug is and what else the person has been taking, including drinking alcohol, over-the-counter, prescription or other illicit drugs. The most serious consequences of overdose relate to loss of consciousness, breathing and cardiac problems which can result in death.

Safe Drinking

Alcohol is never completely safe, the only way to lower the risk of alcohol complications is to drink less. A standard drink contains 10g of pure alcohol, it's important to note many alcoholic drinks contain more than one standard drink and therefore it is critical to check and read the labels.²⁶



²⁵ Australian Government Department of Health, 'Drugs', Australian Government Department of Health (2019), <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/drugs>

²⁶ Australian Government Department of Health, 'Drugs', Australian Government Department of Health (2019), <https://www.health.gov.au/health-topics/drugs>

Binge Drinking and alcohol poisoning

Binge drinking happens when someone drinks large amounts of alcohol in a single session. This means their blood alcohol level reaches the legal limit of intoxication within a short time frame.

Alcohol poisoning is serious and can lead to death due to consuming excessive amounts of alcohol within a short period of time. If you suspect someone has alcohol poisoning **call 000** immediately. Don't leave an unconscious person alone, ensure they are either sitting upright or if lying down turn their head to the side to prevent choking on their own vomit.

Short term/Long term effects of binge drinking

- Feeling sick
- Vomiting
- Shaking
- Hangover
- Injuring themselves or someone else
- Taking part in dangerous behaviour e.g. drink driving, unprotected sex
- Behaviour changes such as stealing or violence
- Withdraw from activities they used to enjoy e.g. work, hobbies, socialising
- Emotional and mental health problems e.g. anxiety, depression
- Physical and psychological dependence of alcohol
- Negative effect to an individual's school, work and relationships
- Health effects, such as damage to the brain and liver

Peer Pressure

Peer pressure is wanting to feel accepted and valued within a group, this means a person often engages in risky behaviour they wouldn't choose to do usually.²⁷

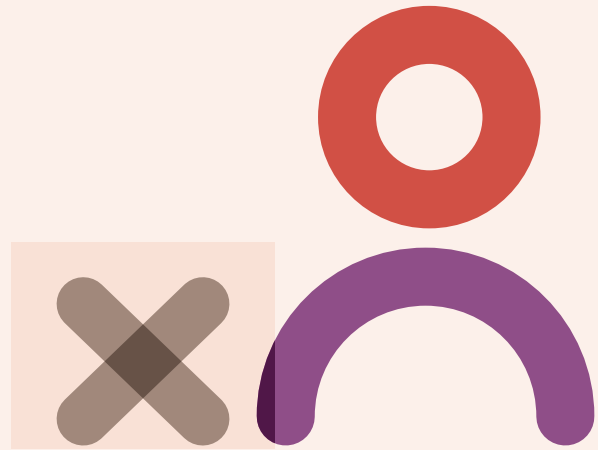
Examples of peer pressure:

- Skipping school
- Shoplifting or stealing
- Having sex
- Driving without a license
- Smoking, drinking alcohol or drug use

How to say no to peer pressure and stand up for yourself

- Saying no to things you know are dangerous and don't want to do such as "ah, I don't feel like it", "my parents would kill me!" or "how about we go do (something else) instead?"
- Moving yourself away from the situation
- Being honest and saying you don't feel comfortable
- Being able to identify the situation where you are being peer pressured

²⁷ Drinkwise, 'alcohol and your health', Drinkwise (2021), <https://drinkwise.org.au/#q=alcohol%20and%20your%20health&r=true>



Services

ORGANISATION

Alcohol and Other Drug Services

Caroline Springs Community Health Centre
228-232 Caroline Springs Boulevard,
Caroline Springs

Melton Health, 195-209 Barriers Rd, Melton
West

☎ 1800 700 514

🔗 bmm.wh.org.au/services-a-z/alcohol-and-other-drug-services-melton-and-caroline-springs

HOW CAN THEY HELP?

Western Health's alcohol and other drug counselling service for those directly affected by alcohol & other drug use and their families or carers

- Alcohol and other drug counselling service
- Community education found in schools and community agencies

Quitline

☎ 13 78 48

🔗 quit.org.au

Quitline are there to support you to quit smoking. Quit Specialists are trained to listen carefully to you to help meet your needs this includes:

- Quit Tips
- LGBTIQ+ quit support
- Quit Plan
- How to cope with quitting smoking

Alcohol and Drug Foundation

☎ 1300 85 85 84

🔗 adf.org.au

The Alcohol and Drug Foundation is Australia's leading organisation committed to preventing and minimising the harm caused by alcohol and other drugs. Their services include:

- Information
- Social support
- Counselling
- Pharmacotherapy
- Withdrawal assistances

Lifeline

☎ 13 11 14

🔗 lifeline.org.au/get-help/information-and-support/substance-misuse-and-addiction/

- Website provides free informative information
- Range of services available located on website
- Free downloadable Tool Kits and Fact Sheets

Homelessness

Homelessness can happen to anyone but there are services available to help

What is homelessness?

Homelessness can present in many ways including, living on the streets, in temporary accommodation, cars, motels, couch surfing, or living in very overcrowded houses²⁸.

Homelessness can be caused by poverty, unemployment or by a shortage of affordable housing, or it can be triggered by family breakdown, mental illness, sexual assault, addiction, financial difficulty, gambling or social isolation and more. Domestic violence is the single biggest cause of homelessness in Australia.

How can you help a homeless person?

- Volunteer at a homeless shelter where you can help serve meals
- Be an advocate by speaking out and addressing homelessness
- Donate clothing to organisations
- Donate food such as canned fruits or vegetables and any sort of non-perishable items

Services available in the local area

To access the following support services, you will need a referral from The Salvation Army - Western Metro Homelessness Service. They can be contacted on: 9313 4300

Hope Street Program

Phone: (03) 8311 9610

Available for young people aged 16-25 and priority is given to those under 19. It provides safe and secure housing to young people and young families for 12 months to 2 years. The program provides young people with the resilience and skills to transition out of homelessness. It provides education about employment, education and participating in the community.

Melton City Council Housing Services

Phone: 9747 7200

Address: 232 High Street, Melton

Operated by Melton City Council, providing housing assistance to support people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless.

The Salvation Army - Western Metro Homelessness Service

Phone: 9313 4300

Address: 6/147 Harvester Rd, Sunshine

The primary support service for people in Melton and surrounds, they provide access to emergency and crisis accommodation, housing information and can provide financial assistance.

²⁸ Salvation Army, 'Homelessness Services', Salvation Army (2021), 2. Understanding homelessness, <https://www.salvationarmy.org.au/about-us/our-services/homelessness-services/>

Education

School and education isn't for everyone, it is okay if you don't feel cut out for school

Some people know exactly what they want to do when they leave school and others have no idea at all and that's ok too. If you are unsure what you want to do or if you don't get in to the course that you wanted there are always other options and pathways available. It is also okay to change your mind about what you want to do, you have plenty of time to decide - it is never too late to return to study if you want to!

If further study is something that you are interested in, the Victorian Government is providing a range of free TAFE courses for priority areas, the initiative is available for people under 20 or those that are upskilling. To be eligible you must also be an Australian citizen or permanent resident. Spaces are limited, however priority is given to women, young people, migrants and other vulnerable populations²⁹.

The local TAFE's that the courses are available at include: **Kangan Institute Essendon** and **GOTAFE Werribee**, as well as a variety of other institutions in Victoria.

Don't feel pressured to go straight in to further study either, a gap year can be extremely beneficial. Taking a year off may help you decide what it is that you want to do, it may be a way to save some extra money to take financial pressure off yourself whilst you study or it may be an opportunity to travel and enjoy yourself before beginning a career or study.

Where to go for more information

Most universities will have blogs containing information on life after high school, it may also be helpful to attend university open days if you are considering further study. They can be a good way to suss out what courses are available in your interest areas and how to go about applying for them.

The Australian Government website also has a wide range of resources on other pathways after school, apprenticeships, defence force jobs and resources to help decide your career pathway.

As for local services, Melton City Council offers a Job Advocates Program to residents of the City of Melton. This service provides support for young people that may be unsure of what they would like to do in the future and can help you source work experience opportunities. Similarly, the Salvation Army Employment Plus Melton is a transition to work service located at Suite 7, 3 Alexandra Street Melton. They can be reached at 13 61 23.

You may also find it beneficial to speak with a careers advisor at your school or university.

²⁹ Victorian Government, 'Free TAFE for lots of jobs', *Vic.gov.au* (2021), <https://www.vic.gov.au/free-tafe>

Support available whilst studying

If you are worried about supporting yourself financially whilst studying, Centrelink offers financial support for individuals who are students or trainees. There are two main payments offered, Youth Allowance and ABSTUDY. For eligibility criteria and how to apply visit the Centrelink website.

If you need additional academic support there are a number of tutoring services available. Most universities will also offer mentors for subjects and provide assistance with academic writing.

Kip McGrath Melton: Provides targeted education support to students that may require additional support.

Address: 83-85 Unitt Street, Melton

Phone: 03 9971 5109

Email: melton@kipmcgrath.com.au

Benefits of education

- Creating job opportunities
- Allows you to meet with like-minded people who share common interests
- More available job opportunities
- Financial independence
- Learning new life time skills

Have you considered volunteering?

Volunteering has many benefits not just for the community but also for your personal and professional development. By volunteering, you can practice skills that may help you to become more employable, meet people who become new friends or even connections for future opportunities, all while doing something good for the community.

Sometimes it can be hard to get a job when you don't have any experience, but how do you gain experience if no one will give you a job? If you're able to, volunteer for an organisation that will give you a chance to gain experience performing tasks that you would do in the type of jobs that you'd like to work in! For more information, Volunteering Victoria is a great place to start. Visit the website and browse the 'for volunteers' section for advice and services that can help you to get started. **www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/for-volunteers/**



Financial Literacy

What is financial literacy?

Financial literacy is your ability to use financial skills to make informed decisions about your money. This can include, savings, budgeting, investing and understanding debt. A strong knowledge of financial literacy can help support you in later stages of life to achieve all kinds of goals

Services

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
Money smart government resource 📌 moneysmart.gov.au	Provides free tools to help you take control of your money including modules and readings on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making financial decisions • Home loans/Mortgages • Savings, debt and credit, and more
Be the Boss - Salvation Army 📌 salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/financial-assistance/youre-the-boss/be-the-boss/	A 3-week FREE online course providing money tips and tricks and how to make small changes to improve financial freedom
Banks Speak to a mortgage broker or Home investment lender - Available at leading banks, ANZ, Westpac, Commonwealth bank, NAB etc.	Banks can offer advice on how to make the most of your savings accounts and give you advice on how to get a home loan.
She's on the money by Victoria Devine Podcast: Can be found on Apple Music and Spotify 📌 shesonthemoney.com.au Book: Can be found at Target, Dymocks and various bookstores Instagram: shesonthemoneyaus	All things financial literacy and targeted at younger people <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings hacks and interest • Investing • Banishing debt • Super funds
The Barefoot Investor by Scott Pape Book: Available from book stores, Kmart, Target	Organising and sorting out your finances
You're in good company Podcast: On Apple Music and Spotify Instagram Page: yigcpodcast	Investing
Girls that invest Podcast: Available on Apple Music and Spotify Instagram: girlsthatinvest	Teaching millennials and Gen Z how to invest

³⁰ Westpac, 'Financial Literacy: Improve your ability to recover and build a better future', Westpac (2021), 1. What's financial literacy, <https://www.westpac.com.au/help/lifemoments/recovery/help-strengthen-your-recovery/financial-literacy-improve-your-knowledge/>

Sport and Leisure

Benefits of Physical Activity

- Improve your overall health and wellbeing³¹
- Improve bone health and lower risk of developing osteoporosis
- Help to maintain a healthy body weight
- Reduce the risk of diabetes, coronary heart disease and stroke
- Lower your risk of falls
- Improve your sleep patterns
- Increase positive thinking and mood
- Improve your self esteem
- Encourages social interaction

Services

ORGANISATION	HOW CAN THEY HELP?
IPLAY Melton Recreation Centre and Caroline Springs Leisure Centre	A FREE school holiday sporting program for young people aged 12-25.
Casual Play Melton Indoor Recreation Centre and Caroline Springs Leisure Centre	A school holiday program that has a small cost. Including basketball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis and futsal
Youth Arts Club Melton Central Community Centre meltonlearning.com.au/events/melton-central-youth-arts-club/	Relaxed art sessions are a space to make, create and collaborate with opportunities to share your work with each other as well as through public exhibitions!
The GAP Youth Centre 5 Graham St. Melton	An independent youth centre with a range of facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive recreation activities • Crime reduction • Build social cohesion
Melton Waves Leisure Centre 206 Coburns Rd, Melton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor swimming pool and wave pool • Indoor gym
Melton Parks and Recreation locations melton.vic.gov.au/Out-n-About/Leisure-Sport-Recreation/Parks-and-Trails/Parks-and-Reserves-in-Melton1/Parks-Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Playground • Picnic facilities and BBQ • Sporting ovals • Walking tracks • Half basketball court • Outdoor fitness stations and equipment

³¹ Better Health, 'Physical activity - it's important', Better Health (2020), <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/physical-activity-its-important>

Connect with us

E healthpromotion@wh.org.au

T 03 9361 9300

 [@healthpromotionatwh](https://www.facebook.com/healthpromotionatwh)



Western Health