

Emerging Minds

Self-care tip sheet for family partners



Being involved with Emerging Minds has been described by our partners as:

‘An amazing sense of knowing that what you have been through will contribute to helping others facing similar circumstances’.

– Emerging Minds Child and Family Partner on their involvement with Emerging Minds.

Like everyone working in this area, it is important that you look after your own wellbeing too.

As well as positive and rewarding feelings during your work, you may also have strong and sometimes overwhelming responses that could impact on your thoughts, behaviour, emotions or physical wellbeing. These responses may be quite common and understandable given your past experiences, which may include trauma.

What can I do if any of these responses occur during my involvement?

- Remember what you have done in the past to take care of yourself in similar situations and do that!
- Recognise that you have been reminded about a distressing experience and that your reactions are completely understandable.
- Feel free to walk out of your meeting or stop your work if needed and find a safe and comfortable space to relax.
- Feel free to return to your work when comfortable and/or return to your meeting if you feel up to it. Remember, there will be no judgement from Emerging Minds’ staff.
- Seek support from Emerging Minds’ staff during the meeting if you need it. If this is not possible, seek support from staff after your meeting.
- Consider seeking peer support from other people with lived experience.
- For some people, it may also be useful to seek spiritual support or guidance.
- People from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander backgrounds may find support in family and kinship networks. Social and emotional wellbeing is maintained through connections to body, mind and emotions, spirituality, land, community, families and culture.
- Is there a place or ‘country’ that helps you connect?
- Are there rituals or practices that help maintain your spirit?

- Try to stick to your usual routine as much as possible, but consider scheduling in a little less activity if you can.
- Accept all of your feelings and express them in a safe way that feels right to you. Others have found that things like writing in a journal, talking to or just being with friends, family or health professionals that you trust can be helpful. Remember, support comes in many forms.
- Maybe spend time doing activities you enjoy. These may include spending time in nature or gardening, listening to music, art, breathing exercises, gentle stretching, exercising or just resting.
- You may find comfort in routine activities such as making the bed, washing the dishes, and doing the laundry.
- Consider asking family and friends for support - including time to talk, time out, or time to just be with someone.
- It is usually best to avoid overusing alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or food to cope.
- Make a plan for what to do if your reactions become overwhelming. Remember that it is okay to ask for help if you feel you need it.



What support is available through Emerging Minds?

Emerging Minds are committed to your wellbeing and have people here to support you: Lydia Trowse (0403 842 014) and Rosie Schellen (0439 433 522). These people are available before, during and after your involvement and can provide confidential support. If Lydia or Rosie are unavailable, then you are welcome to call their respective managers, Ben Rogers (0434 024 074) or Dan Moss on (0438 387 431).

What are my other support options?

Some people prefer to seek support from family, friends or peers, whilst others prefer to seek help from professionals such as GPs, psychologists, social workers or psychiatrists. It is important that whatever support you choose, that you feel safe and comfortable in discussing your thoughts and feelings.

For immediate free assistance, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 for confidential 24-hour counselling and referrals.

This document was co-designed with Emerging Minds' Child and Family Partners. Special thanks to Tanya Ward for her considerable input.