

WELLBEING & SAFETY TOOLKIT

Developed for Rural and Regional Communities

HOLYOAKE

Across Rural and Regional WA, people are managing a range of ongoing pressures, from seasonal challenges to economic uncertainty. At times, these pressures can impact wellbeing and increase the risk of engaging in unsafe or harmful coping strategies.

Recognising early signs of stress, maintaining strong connections, and seeking support are important protective factors. Through practical action, shared responsibility, and access to trusted supports, individuals, families and communities can strengthen wellbeing, reduce harm, and support safety across regional Western Australia.

Holyoake can help you:

- Increase awareness of distress and help you recognise when you or someone you care about may be struggling.
- Impart knowledge and practical tools that support you to look after yourself, your family, your staff, and your wider community.
- Find ways to stay connected and create safe environments, as these are key to reducing risks and harms for individuals, families, and communities.
- Explore strategies to have open, respectful conversations that promote help-seeking, and strengthen both personal and collective resilience and strengths.

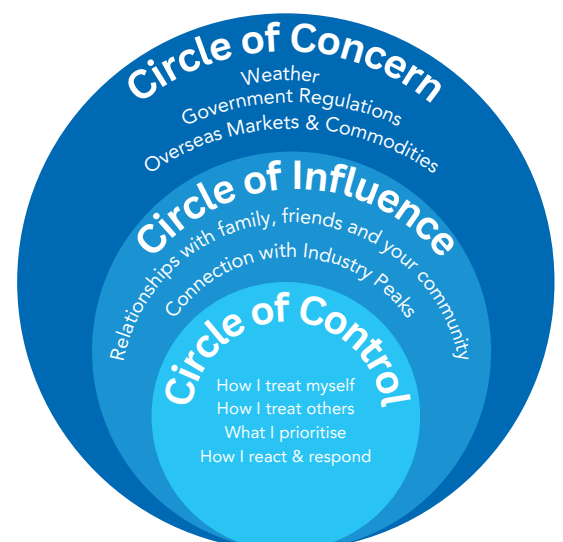
What you can do when you feel overwhelmed

When you're living or farming in WA, uncertainty isn't the exception, it's the norm. From variable rainfall and dry seasons, to global price swings and changing regulations, there's always plenty sitting in the **"circle of concern"**. It's real, and it matters.

The practical decisions you make every day, how you respond to changing conditions, and how you treat others and yourself is your **"circle of control"**, the area that you have the most impact in.

Your power lies in how you organise your day, prioritising what needs doing, keeping communication lines open with family, colleagues and neighbours, and seeking support when it's needed.

Around that sits your **"circle of influence,"** where strong relationships with you friends, neighbours, and Industry can assist with uncertainty over time. Being grounded and focused on what you can control, and working deliberately where you have influence, you support clearer decision-making, reduce unnecessary pressure, decrease distress and maintain consistency in how you operate, regardless of external conditions.



Strategies to Support Yourself and Others Through CHANGE and UNCERTAINTY

1 Listen compassionately and avoid jumping to solutions - resist the urge to jump straight into solutions. Often, what people need most is to feel heard and understood. Offering calm, validating responses can help to reduce stress, strengthens connection, and create the safety people need before they can consider their next steps.

2 Acknowledge the real pressures – validation and acknowledgement are extremely powerful tools. Check in with your family, friends and neighbours, talk openly about how you're coping, and seek the support you need. Strong communities begin with a single conversation.

3 Encourage small, manageable next steps - start with simple, practical tasks within your control; a conversation, a task, a moment of self-care, or reaching out for support. Small steps build momentum, restore clarity, and help you navigate uncertainty with confidence. You don't have to do everything at once — just begin with what you can do right now.

4 Check in regularly and prioritise connection - it makes a big difference, strengthening social ties and creating positive moments of genuine connection. Loneliness and social isolation, especially for those working long hours or in remote areas, increases stress and reduces wellbeing. Remind people they are not facing these challenges on their own.

5 Share information from trusted sources - make a conscious effort to share updates from reliable sources and recognised support services. Avoid speculation, doom-scrolling, and exaggerated messages. Staying grounded in accurate information helps reduce fear, prevents reactive or risky decisions, and supports safer behaviours.

6 Encourage people to reach out for professional support - help is always available, whether in person, online, or over the phone. Seeking support is a sign of strength, not failure. Direct them towards trusted services and evidence-based resources, including fact sheets, training, and workshops from reputable organisations.

These tools can build awareness, increase mental-health and harm-minimisation knowledge, empowering individuals and communities to navigate challenging times, safely and confidently.

Mental Health & Wellbeing Continuum



Are you thriving or surviving? Click [here](#) to check.

Ask yourself three important questions:

- Where are you on the Continuum?
- How long have you been in that space?
- Which way do you think you are heading?

Tips for your Mental Health & Wellbeing



GET GOOD QUALITY REST

- Aim for 7-9 hours of rest per night.
- Give yourself 30-60 minutes to wind down before bed.
- Avoid screens, caffeine, alcohol and big meals before bed.



SCHEDULE TIME FOR THINGS YOU ENJOY

- Set at least 30 mins/day aside to do something you enjoy. This will look different for everyone.
- Make sure to meet your physical, emotional, mental, social, spiritual, and environmental needs.



BE ACTIVE AND EAT WELL

- Aim for balanced meals without overcomplicating things. Consistency matters more than perfection.
- If you can't follow a routine, just move when you can. Even a 10-15 minute walk helps clear the mind.



USE STRATEGIES TO MANAGE YOUR STRESS LEVELS

- Create a task list and break it down into small, manageable steps.
- Use simple grounding techniques or try box breathing.
- Remind yourself you don't have to solve everything at once.



MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECT WITH OTHERS

- Small, consistent catch-ups (a message, call, or coffee) help keep connections strong.
- Share how you're feeling and create a safe space for others to do the same - this builds trust.



BRING OTHERS TO THE TABLE & KEEP LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN

- Don't keep things bottled up in your mind. Share them and talk them through with others.
- Work together on solutions and involve others in decision-making.
- Stay connected with industry peaks and support services.



FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

- Times are unpredictable, but we can choose how we respond and prepare for the unknown.
- Focus on the essentials. Too much news or social media can increase stress.



FOCUS ON FACTS, NOT FEAR

- Use reputable sources to avoid misinformation.
- Focus on key updates rather than overwhelming yourself with everything.
- Focus on actionable facts, remain calm, and avoid getting caught up in fear-driven stories.



SEEK HELP

- Pay attention to signs of stress, anxiety, or overwhelm.
- Don't wait until things feel unmanageable. Talk to someone you trust.
- Use crisis lines, support services, or reach out to someone you trust - even if you're unsure where to begin.

Alcohol & Other Drugs ~ The Impact

During tough times, some people may turn to alcohol or other drugs to cope. This may be to relax, switch off, or avoid difficult thoughts and feelings.

While this might feel helpful in the moment, alcohol and other drugs can have a negative impact on your mental health. They can increase feelings of anxiety, depression and mood swings over time. Even occasional drinking can affect you more than you might realise, influencing your mood, energy levels and overall wellbeing.

Alcohol

Alcohol is a **depressant**, meaning it slows down the brain and nervous system.

It changes the way your brain works to regulate mood and emotions. It may help you feel relaxed at first, but as it wears off, it can lead to:

- Low energy and motivation
- Increased frustration, moodiness or agitation
- Poor sleep
- Anxiety or depression



Alcohol can also affect your decision making, reaction time and concentration. In rural and regional areas, where people often drive long distances, operate machinery, work physically demanding jobs and long hours, these effects can increase the risk of accidents and injuries.

Other Drugs

In some situations, some people may use other drugs such as cannabis, amphetamines, or other prescribed or pain medications. This may be to help cope with stress or anxiety, chronic pain, or increased work demands, such as long shifts at seeding or harvest.

While they may seem helpful at the time, they can:

- Disrupt sleep and appetite
- Increase anxiety or depression
- Affect focus and decision-making
- In some cases, lead to paranoia or psychosis



If you are concerned about your, or someone else's, alcohol or drug use, free and confidential support is available. Alcohol and other drug support services are listed on the last page of this resource.



Tips to reduce risk when drinking

SAY NO - Practice ways to say 'NO' and avoid people that pressure you to drink.

SET A LIMIT
Set a daily or weekly limit and stick to it

SPACE OUT DRINKS
Make every second drink a non-alcoholic drink.

ALCOHOL - FREE DAYS
Choose days each week to not drink any alcohol.

DO SOMETHING ELSE
Go for a walk, try a new sport or take up a hobby.

KNOW YOUR STANDARD DRINKS
Different drinks have different amounts of alcohol

SUPPORTERS - Spend more time with friends and family that support your choice.

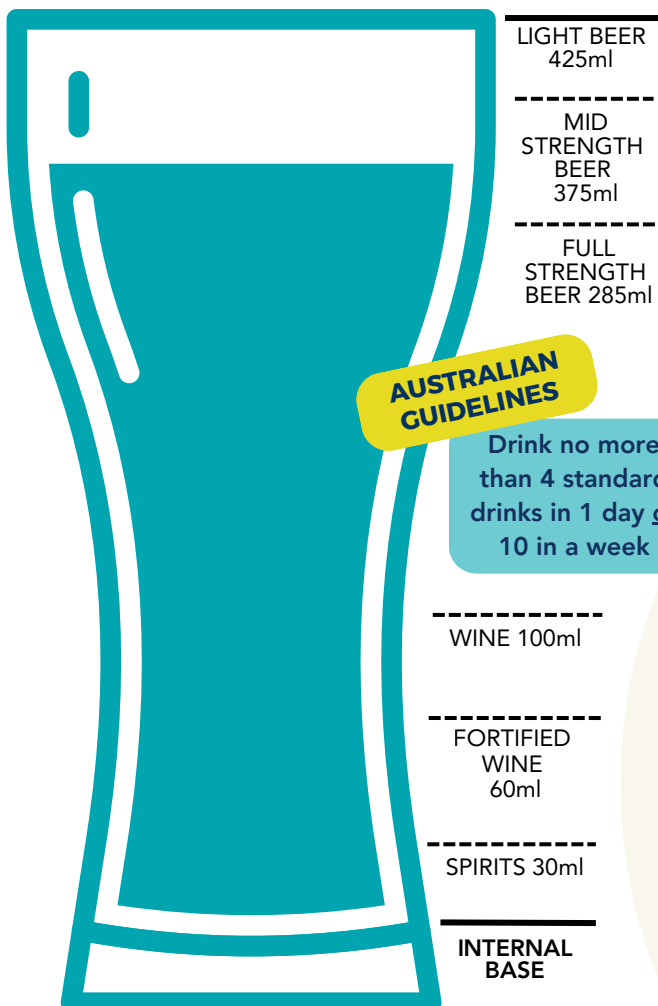
DELAY THE FIRST DRINK
The later you start, the less you'll drink.

LIMIT AVAILABILITY
Avoid 'stocking up' your house

HAVE NON - ALCOHOLIC OPTIONS
Try alternatives (sparkling water, soft drink)

EAT FOOD
Eat before, during and after drinking.

KEEP COUNT
Know how many standard drinks you've had



AUSTRALIAN GUIDELINES

Drink no more than 4 standard drinks in 1 day or 10 in a week

SCAN HERE:
HOW MANY STANDARD DRINKS ARE IN YOUR TYPICAL POUR?



CHECK IN with yourself...



- Am I drinking more than usual?
- Am I relying on it to cope?
- Is it helping - or making things worse?
- Is it affecting work, sleep or relationships?

SCAN HERE:
ARE YOUR DRINKING HABITS PUTTING YOU AT RISK?



CRISIS & MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT:

Lifeline - 13 11 14

Beyond Blue - 1300 224 636

Suicide Callback Service - 1300 659 467

Mensline - 1300 789 978

13Yarn - 13 92 76

ALCOHOL & OTHER DRUG SUPPORT:

Alcohol & Drug Support Line Support Line - 1800 198 024

Parent & Family Drug Support Line - 1800 653 203

Text The Effects (Alcohol and Drug Foundation) - 0439 835 563

RURAL SUPPORT:

Drought Response Hotline - 1300 489 832

Rural Aid - 1300 327 624

Rural West - 1800 612 004

Regional Men's Health Initiative - 6314 1436

TIACS Counselling - 0488 846 988

REGIONAL SUPPORT:

Holyoake

Medicare Mental Health Centres

WACHS Community Mental Health

Amity Health

Headspace

Community Support & Treatment Services

Emergency and other mental health support lines

For more information

Scan the barcode
or CALL 9416 4444

Find us on social media @holyoake  

