



Australian Government



# Keys

to living together

STAYING STRONG

HELPING TO BUILD STRONGER, HEALTHIER RELATIONSHIPS  
FOR COUPLES LIVING IN RURAL AND REGIONAL AREAS



Finding  
the time

Creating a  
great team

Dealing with  
the tough stuff

PLUS MUCH MORE

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# Welcome

**Our relationships with the people around us have a significant influence on our wellbeing and how we live. For most of us, at any given time there is one special relationship—with a partner or spouse—that affects our lives more than any other. All sorts of challenges come our way and influence this important central relationship. Rural life brings its own extra pressures. Everyone’s experience is different but, in all cases, the underlying strength of your relationship can help you manage these challenges. We hope this booklet provides you with useful tips, tools and ideas to enhance your relationships.**

Whether you live in a remote community, on a farm, in a small country town or a regional centre, there are issues unique to rural life that can have an impact on your relationships. The effect of the economy, the climate, isolation and the challenges of day to day life can, at times, place stress on you and the people you are close to. You can stay strong as a couple and a family by working together, supporting each other and talking things over. It’s not all about endless deep and meaningful discussions—it’s just as important to have some fun and a good laugh together.

We’ve worked with professionals to create this resource. It includes suggestions and tools for working with the various changes and challenges you may experience in your relationships. There’s information on everything from finding time and doing things together, to planning a budget and dealing with a crisis. You can use this booklet as a guide to assist you to look after and strengthen your relationships as you deal with the challenges of life as a couple.





# Contents



## Time for relationships

Rural life .....	6
Plan for finding the time.....	7
Understanding each other .....	8
Communication tips.....	9



## Family

Understanding family influences .....	10
Family of origin checklist (what we want for our family).....	11



## Talking about the difficult stuff

Pressures of country life .....	13
Financial hardship .....	14
Preparing a budget .....	15
Other tough issues.....	18



## Working together

Emotional ups and downs are normal .....	19
Resolving differences.....	21
Developing your own set of rules .....	22
Being flexible about who does what .....	23
Quick quiz.....	23



## Taking care of yourself

It's okay to ask for help .....	24
Other ideas.....	25



## Crisis? What crisis?

Dealing with the unexpected.....	27
Resource directory.....	28

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## Rural life

**Not surprisingly, lack of time is one of the major issues facing couples today. This is especially true of farming and rural families. It isn't always easy to balance the needs of your relationship alongside the demands of rural life.**

There's the ongoing maintenance of your home, business or property, trying to make ends meet, and planning and budgeting for the extra travel that can be involved in basic activities like shopping, schooling or visiting a health centre. Add to that caring for your family, working, keeping in touch with friends, trying to pursue other interests and hobbies, or simply having some downtime now and again. When your life is so full, it's easy to slip into putting yourself and your relationship last. However, relationship educators say that couples do need to make sure they make time for each other and have some time for fun, both together and apart.

*"It is like it would be in any relationship when things are smooth; you have a better feeling about the whole scene. I think you work better, make better decisions, sleep better, rest better and play better," says Greg, a farmer.*



“  
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need to make  
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time for each  
other...**  
”



# Plan for finding time

It can be difficult to fit everything in, but you may like to sit down together and use the plan below as a guide to help find some time for each other.

- Both of you list the regular things you do during the week that can't be changed (e.g. feeding livestock, helping the children with their school work or taking them to sport).
- Now bring your lists together. Look at where you can find some time

for each other. You don't need hours each day—research shows that even 20 minutes a day will make a difference and give you time to connect as a couple.

- Agree to have a date at least once a month. You don't have to go out, just do something special together (e.g. cook your partner their favourite meal).

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
morning							
afternoon							
night							

This month we will try to have our date on .....(e.g. 8:30pm 3 May) .

It won't always be easy. Issues such as how much time you spend working versus maintaining the property or looking after children may be difficult to resolve. You and your partner might not always agree on what is an acceptable amount of time for various things, but these are the issues you need to talk over. While you might not always come up with a solution, it can help if you understand each other's point of view.

Be honest with yourself and each other about what is really important and what can and can't be changed.

*"The thing I miss the most these days is fun. I remember we used to laugh a lot more...now not so much. We are so busy trying to stay on top of everything that I think we have forgotten how to have fun together,"* says Kathy, a hairdresser.

## TIP

Relationships need ongoing maintenance too. It can be hard to find time when rural life can create what feels like 24 hour-a-day/seven-day-a-week demands on your time. All the more reason why finding small pockets of time, that are just for you and your partner, is so important to help you stay connected in your relationship.

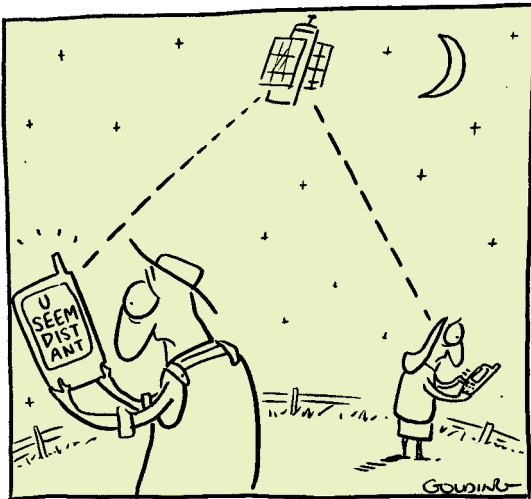


# Understanding each other

Many people prefer to keep their troubles to themselves. They feel that talking about their concerns is a waste of time or a sign of weakness. But as a couple, you're in this together. This is why it's a good idea to talk things over with each other. While it may be difficult at first to open up and talk about how you feel, it's much more positive and helpful than bottling it all up and just trying to get on with things.

*"Sometimes my relationship is like when I get my car bogged—it is damn hard work to get it out and going again,"* says Paul, a plumber.

Remember though, just because you're partners, doesn't mean you'll always think and feel the same way. At times you will have different thoughts and feelings and different ways of dealing with them. Communicating openly helps you and your partner understand your differences. This can lead to fewer misunderstandings and a clearer path to decisions and actions.





# Communication tips

Developing better communication skills in your relationship does take practice and it's worthwhile being aware of the way you communicate. You can support each other through this process by using the following five tips.

<p><b>1. Listen actively</b></p>	<p>When your partner is speaking, make sure you are listening and understanding the ideas and thoughts they are trying to tell you. If your partner is speaking and you are thinking about what you want to say next, then you will not truly understand their point of view.</p>
<p><b>2. Make eye contact</b></p>	<p>Focus on your partner and try and avoid doing things that give the message that you are not listening or are not interested (e.g. raising your eye brows, reading the paper or watching TV).</p>
<p><b>3. Express your views</b></p>	<p>Say how you think or feel about things. Staying quiet can just leave you or your partner frustrated and maybe angry. Speak up respectfully and your partner will understand you better.</p>
<p><b>4. Use "I" statements</b></p>	<p>"I" statements help to keep communication positive by saying how you think, feel or see a situation rather than blaming your partner for how you feel. For example, "I don't want to, and this is why...." instead of using blaming statements such as "You can't tell me what to do!"</p>
<p><b>5. Understand each other's point of view</b></p>	<p>Be respectful of each other's opinions, even if they are different. Explore why you each feel this way and come to some middle ground or agree to differ and move on.</p>



# Understanding family influences

**Rural communities may involve many relatives living near each other. This can be a great source of strength and support but it can also mean that you don't have much time for yourselves.**

Tension between parents and children can also come up as families deal with different expectations and styles of two or even three generations. It is important to recognise these sorts of issues and discuss them. The table on the following page may help you work through issues relating to family influences.

It's also useful to understand why we do the things we do, and it can help to talk it over with your partner. Finding out why you're not fazed by something but your partner gets all bent out of shape over it can help you better understand each other and work as a team.

Everyone has their own ways of

behaving and communicating with others. We learn much of this from our parents and the families we grew up in. But the way you and your partner learnt to communicate and behave when you were younger may no longer be useful for communicating with each other today. You may both need to learn to talk to each other differently so it works for your family now.

*"David works really hard, is a great father to our children and a very supportive husband. But it can be really hard sometimes—he's not a talker and I am. It's hard because I come from a family of talkers," says Jackie, a bank teller.*

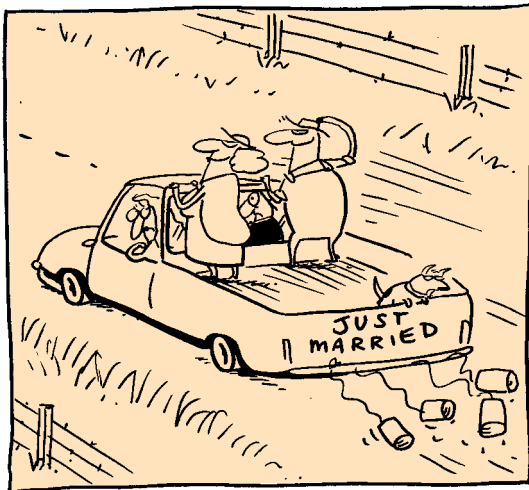
You can use the table on page 11 to identify how your parents did things and decide together how it will be done in your family. If you wish, use this as a starting point and add more items to discuss.





# Family of origin checklist (what we want for our family)

How did our parents show they were:	His parents	Her parents	How do we want to show we are:
Worried			
Angry or upset			
Happy			
In disagreement with each other			
Feeling affectionate towards each other			





## Family

### TIPS

- It's important to tackle issues before they become problems.
- Focus on keeping your relationship with your partner strong.
- Regularly writing down how you think, feel or see a situation may be a good way of working out your needs and clarifying your thoughts and feelings.
- Keep in mind that men and women often have different ways of dealing with stressful situations.
- Stop sometimes and think about why and how you are really doing things.





## Pressures of country life

There are lots of great things about living in rural or regional communities, and they make a major contribution to Australia's economy, society and sense of identity. But things are changing—globalisation, climate, our aging population, different expectations of younger generations, and economic conditions all affect the viability of living and doing business in the country.

Rural communities largely depend on the land and agricultural industry. Natural disasters, climate variability and downturn in the economy can cause stress for many businesses, families and individuals and have a major impact on rural communities. This in turn can affect your relationships, as a couple and a family.

*"As farming communities take blow after blow from climatic, economic and generic influences, the pressure (and ensuing confusion and anxiety) on individuals, couples and communities mounts insidiously, yet is often unacknowledged and unexpressed at a personal level,"* says Rita McInnes, a former Researcher for Centacare in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales.





# Financial hardship

Tight financial times can place enormous strain on family relationships. Every person's financial situation is different, especially in rural Australia where the family income may be sourced from the land or involve a salaried income from town, or a mixture of both. Add to this the complexity of family-owned farms and you're dealing with some complicated situations. Rosalie Pattenden of Centacare Melbourne says research shows that 70 per cent of couples see money as a problem for them. Rosalie says couples are making a sound investment in their future when deciding to sort out their finances.

“  
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for them.**  
”

- Sitting down with your partner and talking about your finances can help you see your situation more clearly.
- There are many specialist rural support services available that may be of assistance to you or your family. A list of various support services can be found on page 28.
- If your income is from salary-based employment, taking the time to become more aware of your spending habits and ways to manage money more effectively is important too. It's amazing how easily money disappears and bills add up over time if we don't keep track of them.
- Developing a budget is a great way to keep track of where your money is going. Working out a budget and having a plan for your money isn't difficult, and it can help you do the things you really want.
- You can use the budget planner on the following pages to help you work out how much you earn and what you spend it on.



## TIP

If you would like some more help, the Australian Government Financial Literacy Foundation website <[www.understandingmoney.gov.au](http://www.understandingmoney.gov.au)> has lots of great tips on ways to manage your money.



# Preparing a budget

When you consider that financial problems are a common cause of relationship failure, getting your finances in order makes a lot of sense. It is well worth setting some time aside to look at the budget planner below, either together or individually.

Start by writing down all of your income and all of your expenses. You'll need to decide whether your budget will be a weekly, fortnightly or a monthly guide. Some people like to match their budget to their pay period (if you have a salaried income). Once you make a decision, make sure all the numbers you write down are for the same period.

When you've worked out your combined income and expenses, you'll be able to see how much regular income you get and where that money goes over your chosen time period. Take away your total expenses from your total income to get your result.

If you decide to keep your finances totally separate you may like to have separate budgets too. Just remember you will still need to make some decisions on who will pay for what and how you will use your budgets to reach your common goals.

TOTAL INCOME	-	TOTAL EXPENSES	=	?
\$		\$		\$

Your result will show whether you're spending more than you earn or if you have money left after your expenses to use for other things.

## Income

Work out your regular income. You can adjust this table to meet your specific needs if you are not a regular salary income earner.

Type of income	Amount received each period
Salary or wage (after tax)	\$.....
Farm/business income (e.g. livestock, produce)	\$.....
Pension or government allowance	\$.....
Child support or other payments	\$.....
Regular income from investment properties, distributions from a managed fund, or dividends from shares	\$.....
Other	\$.....
<b>Total income</b>	<b>\$.....</b>



## Expenses

Work out your regular expenses. Remember to use the same time frame that you chose for your income.

Next, add up the subtotals to get your total expenses.

Household expenses		Education expenses	
Rent	\$.....	School fees	\$.....
Repairs	\$.....	University or TAFE fees	\$.....
Electricity	\$.....	Books and uniforms	\$.....
Gas	\$.....	Camps/excursions	\$.....
Water	\$.....	Other	\$.....
Telephone/mobile	\$.....	<b>Sub total</b>	\$.....
Rates	\$.....	<b>Debt repayments</b>	
Internet	\$.....	Mortgage	\$.....
Pay TV	\$.....	Car loan/s	\$.....
Furniture	\$.....	HECS or HELP payments	\$.....
Appliances	\$.....	Credit cards	\$.....
Groceries	\$.....	Personal loans	\$.....
Clothing	\$.....	Business loans	\$.....
Gardening	\$.....	Store credit	\$.....
Machinery/equipment	\$.....	Store cards	\$.....
Other	\$.....	Lay-bys	\$.....
<b>Sub total</b>	\$.....	Other	\$.....
		<b>Sub total</b>	\$.....

### What do we do with our budget?

Is the result what you were expecting? If you're spending all of your income (or even more), your budget can show the areas where you might be able to change your spending habits. If you need to make a change you might like to sort your expenses into two groups: essentials

and extras. Remember you both need to be happy with this budget, so make sure you can both live with the changes. If you have money left over, think about how that money could be used. Getting debt under control is important. Set some goals together, and then work out how your budget will help you reach them.



Transport expenses		Savings	
Fuel	\$.....	Superannuation contrib.	\$.....
Car registration	\$.....	Regular savings	\$.....
Repairs/maintenance	\$.....	Regular investments	\$.....
Public transport	\$.....	Other	\$.....
Parking	\$.....	<b>Sub total</b>	\$.....
Other	\$.....		
<b>Sub total</b>	\$.....		
Medical expenses		Other expenses	
Doctor	\$.....	Child care	\$.....
Dentist	\$.....	Child support payments	\$.....
Medicines	\$.....	Gifts	\$.....
Other	\$.....	Donations	\$.....
<b>Sub total</b>	\$.....	Hobbies and sports	\$.....
Insurance		Subscriptions	\$.....
Farm/property/business	\$.....	Newspapers & magazines	\$.....
Home and contents	\$.....	Movies & DVDs	\$.....
Car	\$.....	Restaurants & takeaway	\$.....
Machinery/equipment	\$.....	Alcohol & cigarettes	\$.....
Health	\$.....	Pet food	\$.....
Income protection	\$.....	Other pet costs	\$.....
Life	\$.....	Other	\$.....
Other	\$.....	<b>Sub total</b>	\$.....
<b>Sub total</b>	\$.....		
Farm or business expenses (eg purchasing stock, feed)			
.....			\$.....
.....			\$.....
.....			\$.....
.....			\$.....
<b>Total expenses</b>			\$.....



## Other tough issues

**Often, your livelihood as a rural couple depends on the climate and the general state of the economy, both of which you have no control over. This can leave you feeling powerless, with fewer choices and opportunities to change jobs or generate more income during tough times.**

You may have made a move to the country to change your lifestyle, and you're finding the transition a little harder than expected. It may also be difficult if you've always lived on the land but now your children and even some of your neighbours are moving away. You might be in a relationship where one of you spends extended time away from home working, or maybe an opportunity for you to attend social activities has become rare because money is tight.

You may be faced with difficult decisions such as whether you need

to leave your local community, your family and support network to seek work elsewhere, whether you should diversify or sell your business or work out how to adjust to your new situation. These are just a few of the personal and financial choices you may need to make to provide the best life possible for your family.

Making major decisions and the uncertainties surrounding these decisions may impact on your relationships—especially if you try to keep a lid on what is happening to you. Talk, share, listen and if you want to, talk again. This is much better than taking out your frustrations on each other.

It is important to let your partner know what you are thinking, how you feel and to find out how they are. For more details, see the Working Together section on page 19.



### TIP

Making major decisions can be a difficult process and it may help to list all the options you can think of, with pros and cons for each option. Then discuss these with your partner.



# Emotional ups and downs are normal

*“Everything we do is for the farm, for the business, for our kids. There would be no point to it all if we weren’t a team,” says William, a farmer.*

Working as a team helps you deal with the challenges of modern life in the country. However, when we work together we don’t always agree on how to approach things. Sometimes there are differences of opinion and conflict.

Disagreements are a normal part of any healthy relationship and don’t have to be a bad thing. In fact, if one of you continually gives in just to keep the peace, it can be much worse. Fiona McDonald, Manager of Education Services at Relationships Australia, Western Australia says, “No one can have their own way all the time. It’s not good for a relationship. You have to consider your partner’s feelings and wishes in your decision making”. Differences need not come between you. They can be valuable if you see them as a learning opportunity. The more you work together and

understand your partner, the stronger you are as a unit, and that is a good thing. Listen to each other’s point of view and try to understand each other’s feelings.

The key is to respect each other, and not to let your emotions take over. Chances are your disagreements will be over things you feel strongly about. Your emotions will be heightened and

you may get angry and frustrated. This is fine, as long as you can express your feelings without being destructive—and this is not always easy. When we get really angry or upset, physical and emotional tension builds up and can cloud our judgement. This can make it impossible to get your point across in a rational way. Be aware

of how you are reacting and if you are starting to raise your voice, your palms are getting sweaty or your pulse is racing, it may be a good idea to take a break and agree to have the discussion later.

“  
**The key is to respect each other, and not to let your emotions take over**  
 ”



## Working together

Before you tackle the topic again, ask yourself these questions:

**1. What am I feeling?**

Are you feeling angry, hurt, embarrassed, jealous, disappointed or betrayed?

**2. Why am I feeling this?**

Identify exactly what has made you feel this way. Is there anything from the past that could be adding to the way you feel?

**3. What do I want to change?**

Know what it is that you want to work on. What needs to be resolved from the past or present? What action will you take?

**4. Is my reaction warranted?**

Is your reaction suitable to the issue at hand? Consider the possibility that you could be overreacting.

These questions are also worth considering if you are thinking of raising something that might cause conflict.





# Resolving differences

It can also be a good idea to agree on a set of rules for dealing with situations when you disagree. Here are a few ideas:

- **Pick the right time**—pick a time when you can both give your full concentration. Avoid times when either of you are tired or stressed. Make sure there are no distractions; turn off the TV and take the phone off the hook.
- **Attack the problem**—keep your discussion focused on the problem and possible solutions, try not to attack each other personally.
- **Stay focused**—stick to the present, and stay focused on the problem at hand. Don't rehash past mistakes that can't be changed and don't try to tackle every other problem. Address other problems at another time.
- **Use the speaker/listener technique**—if your partner is speaking, just listen and try to understand what your partner is saying before you take your turn to talk (see *Communication tips* on page 9).
- **Reach a conclusion**—decide on what to do. You will probably need to compromise, remember you can't win all of the time, and nobody likes feeling they have lost. If you feel like you're winning, chances are your partner feels like they are losing and that's not good for your relationship.

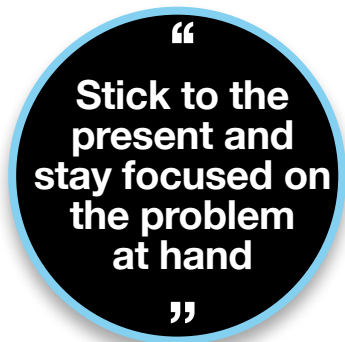




# Developing your own set of rules

## RULES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT

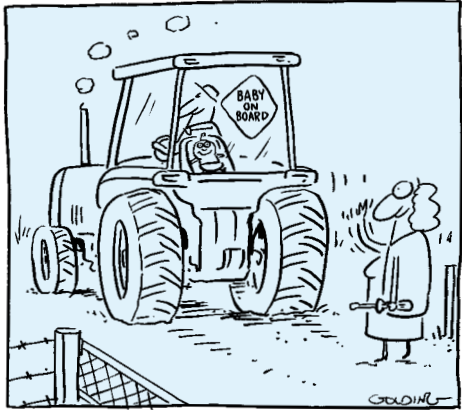
	<i>eg. always allow each other to walk away and cool down if an argument gets too heated</i>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
Agreed:	Agreed:





# Being flexible about who does what

Working out who does what in your relationship can be tricky. Many couples think this will sort itself out, but this is rarely the case. One cause of tension for many couples is not being able to strike a happy balance as a couple about sharing the load. Also, frustration may occur where couples have different opinions on things like what is clean and what is dirty or when a job is finished or not.



So...what to do about it?

Simple really—talk it through. For example, if one of you gets work in town to supplement the family income, the other can show support by asking what they can do to help. The trick is to work out what you like, don't like, will do, won't do, and be prepared to listen to each other's point of view, and come to some kind of compromise or middle ground. Being flexible or prepared to change roles at times is important too.

## Quick quiz

Answer these questions to help you work out who does what:

- How happy are you with what each of you is responsible for in your relationship?
- How happy is your partner with what each of you is responsible for in your relationship?
- In what ways have you changed your behaviours to help your partner?
- In what ways has your partner changed their behaviours to help you?
- Do you feel the work load is fairly shared between you and your partner?
- What would you like to change in the way you and your partner share the load between you?



# It's okay to ask for help

**People living in rural communities are known for their resilience, humour and ability to manage through hard times. But with unpredictable weather and the high costs of living, many folk are increasingly experiencing:**

- an ongoing sense of despair, hopelessness, loneliness
- a sense of not managing everyday life
- a sense of guilt and self blame
- loss and grief from what is happening
- consistently poor concentration, motivation and energy
- overuse of alcohol and/or drugs
- sleep disturbances
- changes in eating (e.g. overeating or loss of appetite)
- high blood pressure associated with stress.

Even though much has changed in the past decade, some people still experience a sense of embarrassment or shame about seeking professional help for stress-related issues.

People often find it difficult to talk about these sorts of feelings or experiences which may be a sign of depression.

You may be reluctant to talk to friends or be seen at the local healthcare practices. Sometimes the distance and cost of travel to the nearest health professional also makes it difficult to seek help.

Despite these difficulties, you can successfully overcome depression, especially when you seek help early on. If you or someone close to you is experiencing any of the concerns listed above, there are places where you can get help confidentially, like Beyond Blue, DepressioNet or Mensline (see page 28 for contact details of these and other helpful services).

*"Finding professionally trained people can help make a real difference. Whilst this initially can be difficult in rural communities, my experience has been that where people who have sought assistance recognise they are genuinely listened to, and respected for who they are, then often positive outcomes occur for themselves and other family members. The benefits gained have far outweighed that initial fear of seeking assistance"* says Dr Peter Munn, CEO, Centacare Port Pirie.

**“  
The benefits  
gained (from seeking  
professional help) have  
far outweighed that  
initial fear of seeking  
assistance  
”**



## Other ideas

It's much easier to take care of all your responsibilities and your relationship when you look after yourself too. That's why it is so important to find time to be kind to yourself—no matter how busy your life is or how many pressures you have. Factor in a little time to enjoy the things that interest you or help you to relax. For example:

**Make a list** or think of small inexpensive, easily accessible things you can do (like go for a walk, catch up with mates, read a book, watch a DVD or have a warm bath). Make this list as long as you can.

**Give yourself an afternoon off** work to do something you enjoy (like watch the cricket, go fishing or paint your nails).

**If you have worries**, sometimes it's helpful to limit the time you allow yourself to focus on them. Try writing it down and then putting it out of your mind for the rest of the day and getting on with other things.

**Catch up regularly** with people who are supportive and important to you. Make sure it happens, even if it's just for a short time and only every so often.

**Good sleep, eating well, exercise** and regular health checks are important and are even recommended by experts as ways for fighting depression.

Above all, remember **you are not alone**. In every community there are people who want to help. Set realistic goals and most of all be fair to yourself and to your partner.



Crisis? What crisis?





# Dealing with the unexpected

Dealing with a crisis can be stressful on any relationship, regardless of how close you are or how long you have been together. However, when you decide to share your life with someone you are also making a decision to share not only the good times but also the harder ones.

Events such as an illness in the family, death of a close friend, or unexpected unemployment can present complex challenges to families. These challenges may seem insurmountable, but in actual fact can strengthen your relationship.

The important thing to remember is that you will both have your own way of dealing with the situation. You shouldn't expect your partner to react in the same way. In fact according to Andrew King, Mensline Australia, men and women tend to handle problems differently.

*"Guys are less practiced at talking about their feelings", says Andrew.*

*"But it doesn't mean they love or trust their partner less because they won't talk about their problems."*

This will mean that you will need to be understanding with each other. It is important for both of you to recognise how you are feeling. No matter how you deal with things, ignoring your feelings will not make them go away.

Men tend to take a more solution-based approach to problems, so it may be useful to work out together what can be

done or how you can help. While women like to talk things through, if this is difficult for you, being willing to listen is a great start.

Remember to be gentle with each other, sometimes just knowing you have someone around to give you support, can make all the difference. However if you don't feel like you or your partner is coping, get support. Friends, relatives, counsellors, and doctors can all be a big help in these times.



## TIPS

- Understand that men and women often handle problems differently.
- Recognise your thoughts and feelings—ignoring them is unlikely to make them go away.
- If you want to find a solution, work out what can be done in a practical sense.
- If talking about the issue is hard for you, start by listening.
- Get help from friends, relatives, counsellors or doctors if needed.

# Resource directory

## **Australian Government Financial Literacy Website**

[www.understandingmoney.gov.au](http://www.understandingmoney.gov.au)  
1300 300 630

## **Beyond Blue**

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)  
1300 224 636

## **The Bush Connection**

[www.bushconnection.org.au](http://www.bushconnection.org.au)  
07 4639 7897

## **Centrelink Drought Assistance Hotline**

[www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/drought\\_assist\\_counselling.htm](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/drought_assist_counselling.htm)  
13 23 16

## **Centrelink Farmer Assistance Line**

[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)  
1800 050 585

## **Centrelink - Murray-Darling Basin Assistance and Referral Line**

[www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/drought\\_assist\\_counselling.htm](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/drought_assist_counselling.htm)  
1800 050 015

## **Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

[www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought](http://www.daff.gov.au/agriculture-food/drought)  
02 6272 3933

## **DepressioNet**

[www.depressionservices.org.au](http://www.depressionservices.org.au)

## **Family Relationship Advice Line**

1800 050 321

## **Family Relationships Online**

[www.familyrelationships.gov.au](http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au)

## **Family Relationship Services Program**

[www.fahcsia.gov.au/frsp](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/frsp)  
(Includes a directory of organisations providing family relationship support services)

## **Lifeline**

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)  
13 11 14

## **Mensheds Australia**

[www.mensheds.com.au](http://www.mensheds.com.au)

## **Mensline Australia**

[www.menslineaus.org.au](http://www.menslineaus.org.au)  
1300 789 978

## **National Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Helpline**

1800 200 526

**New South Wales Department  
of Primary Industries**

[www.dpi.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au)

1800 808 095

**Parentline Qld & NT**

[www.parentline.com.au](http://www.parentline.com.au)

1300 301 300

**Parentline VIC**

[www.parentline.vic.gov.au](http://www.parentline.vic.gov.au)

13 22 89

**Parent Helpline SA**

[www.parenting.sa.gov.au](http://www.parenting.sa.gov.au)

1300 364 100

**Parentline NSW**

[www.parentline.org.au](http://www.parentline.org.au)

1300 130 052

**Parent Help Centre WA**

[www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/  
Resources/Parenting/](http://www.community.wa.gov.au/DFC/Resources/Parenting/)

1800 654 432

**Parentline ACT**

(02) 6287 3833

**Parenting Line TAS**

1300 808 178

**Queensland Government: Queensland  
Primary Industries and Fisheries**

[www.dpi.qld.gov.au](http://www.dpi.qld.gov.au)

13 25 23

**Rural Assist Information Network**

[www.rain.net.au](http://www.rain.net.au)

**Rural Financial Counselling Service  
Program**

[www.rfcs.gov.au](http://www.rfcs.gov.au)

1800 686 175

**Government of South Australia:  
Primary Industries and Resources SA**

[www.pir.sa.gov.au](http://www.pir.sa.gov.au)

08 8463 3000

**Government of Tasmania: Primary  
Industries and Water**

[www.dpiw.tas.gov.au](http://www.dpiw.tas.gov.au)

1300 368 550

**Victorian Government Department  
of Primary Industries**

[www.dpi.vic.gov.au](http://www.dpi.vic.gov.au)

136 186

**Government of Western Australia:  
Department of Agriculture and Food**

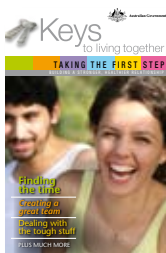
[www.agric.wa.gov.au](http://www.agric.wa.gov.au)

1300 725 572

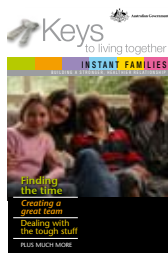
# Notes



# Others in this series



Taking the first step and making a significant commitment to someone you love is one of the most exciting and important times in your relationship. **Keys to Living Together — Taking the first step** includes the information you need to develop your own set of relationship tools.




Creating a new relationship and with it a new family is an exciting and important time, that can often also be very complicated. **Keys to Living Together — Instant families** includes information to help you develop a set of tools to help make the transition a little smoother.



Going from a couple to a family with a child is one of the most exciting and important times in your relationship. It is impossible to ignore the fact that your lives are about to be transformed forever. **Keys to Living Together — Then we were three** includes information to help you develop a set of tools to deal with the changes in your relationship.



Having children is one of the most exciting and important times in your life. But realising your child has disability means supporting each other and working as a team is more important than ever. **Keys to Living Together – Life-Changing Journeys** includes information and tips to help you deal with the many changes and challenges you may encounter.



FOR ADDITIONAL COPIES OR  
MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Department of Families, Housing, Community Services  
and Indigenous Affairs

PO Box 7576, Canberra Business Centre ACT 2610

Telephone: 1800 050 009\*

(\*free unless calling from a mobile or pay phone)

National Relay Service for users who are deaf or have a hearing  
or speech impairment

TTY: 1800 555 677

Speak and Listen: 1800 555 727

Internet relay: [www.relayservice.com.au](http://www.relayservice.com.au)

[www.fahcsia.gov.au/keys](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/keys)

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