

# let's talk managing stress during drought



Rural communities are adaptable and resourceful with people relying on being able to solve problems and overcome challenges. However, in drought or dry conditions, there are often factors that are out of our control and ongoing uncertainty which can cause significant stress. When we are busy or stressed, looking after our mental and physical health can often be forgotten but it's important to manage our health to ensure that we can make clear decisions and cope with other stressors in our life.

## Signs that someone may be stressed:

- Anger or irritability
- Worry or nervousness
- Loss of concentration
- Loss of interest
- Low energy
- Social withdrawal
- Relationship issues
- Unusual headaches and body aches
- Changes in sleeping and eating patterns
- Increased drug or alcohol use

When someone is under prolonged stress, they may have difficulty making decisions regarding their finances, production or relationships. If someone is showing signs of being stressed, it's important to talk about it and take action as soon as possible.

## Having a conversation:

When having a conversation, chat to the person in a comfortable place about what you have noticed and why you are concerned. You do not need to fix their problems but you need to listen to their concerns and reassure the person that there is help available.

## Ways you can start the conversation:

*"I haven't seen you around much lately, ...what's been happening?"*

*"Things have been tough, how are you coping?"*

*"There's been a lot going on, how are you managing?"*

*"I've noticed that..., how are you going?"*

*If the person is showing signs of stress, then encourage them to take action.*

## Looking after yourself

In tough times we also need to remember to look after ourselves. Doing things daily to take care of yourself is important, as it will increase your capacity to deal with stress.

- Try to have some time out
- Do things you enjoy
- Keep in touch with family, friends and neighbours

- Have a plan: Think about steps and decisions you will make as circumstances change. This could include when to act, your succession or exit plan, or wellbeing plan. Having a plan set early can help with decision making when things get tough or stressful. Utilise your networks and seek advice from professionals to make more informed decisions.

- Eat well, sleep well and only use alcohol in moderation.
- Get help early if not feeling your best self: reach out to loved ones, a professional or self-help tool. RAMHP Coordinators can help guide you through the options.

**If you or someone else is in immediate danger call 000 or go to your nearest hospital emergency department.**

# How to take action...

**GP** – Contact a General Practitioner for initial support and referral options.

**Health Direct** – [www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)  
Look up health services in your area.

**NSW Mental Health Line** – 1800 011 511  
24/7 telephone line providing advice and referral.

**Lifeline** – 13 11 14, [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)  
24/7 confidential telephone line for crisis support.

**Suicide Call Back Service** – 1300 659 467  
[www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)  
24/7 telephone line for anyone affected by suicide.

**Alcohol Drug Information Service** – 1800 250 015  
[www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au/webchat](http://www.yourroom.health.nsw.gov.au/webchat)  
24/7 confidential telephone line providing advice, referral and support.

**Salvation Army Rural & Remote Chaplains** visit rural and remote communities and properties across NSW, providing emotional and practical support and assistance.  
National Call Centre - 02 9466 3544  
[www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/rural-support/](http://www.salvationarmy.org.au/need-help/rural-support/)

**Head to Health** – [www.headtohealth.gov.au](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au)  
Find Australian mental health services and resources.

**CRANaplus Bush Support Services** – 1800 805 391  
24/7 confidential telephone line for rural and remote health professionals and their families nationwide.



Further drought support:



**DPI Drought Hub** – [www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.droughthub.nsw.gov.au/)  
Provides information on services and supports available to prepare for and manage drought and recover from drought.

**DPI Rural Recovery Support Service:**  
Providing a single point of contact for information and referrals for primary producers and landholders impacted by natural disasters. General enquiries to 0448 077 684 or email: [flood.recovery@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:flood.recovery@dpi.nsw.gov.au)

**Local Land Service** – 1300 795 299  
[www.lls.nsw.gov.au](http://www.lls.nsw.gov.au)  
Provides services and knowledge in regards to agricultural production, animal health, pest and disease management and environmental threats.

**NSW Rural Assistance Authority** – 1800 678 593  
[www.raa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.raa.nsw.gov.au)  
Provides tailored access to loans, grants, rebates and subsidies for primary producers and small business operators.

**Rural Financial Counselling Service** – 1800 686 175  
Provides free information and assistance on financial position, budgets and submitting applications to primary producers, fishers and small rural businesses.

**Farmer Assistance Hotline** – 13 23 16  
Provides information and advice to Australian farmers and their partners about the Farm Household Allowance.

**Business Connect** – [www.service.nsw.gov.au/business/business-connect](http://www.service.nsw.gov.au/business/business-connect)  
Provides free tailored business advice in one-on-one sessions. Topics include business planning, marketing and cash flow.

## Find your local RAMHP Coordinator

VISIT [www.ramhp.com.au](http://www.ramhp.com.au)



RAMHP has Coordinators based across NSW who are able to provide specialist knowledge and support for people experiencing mental health concerns.