

Don't go through this alone

This one is obviously not a technique, but it really made the difference for most of us at Sibling Support.

People can be far more understanding than you might think. It can be really helpful to talk it out with a trusted friend, family member, support group, psychologist or counsellor. You could also try the online counselling, the support line at Family Drug Help (1300 660 068) or post a story in the story area of the website (see the end of this handout for more numbers and websites).

I have to admit, the idea of seeing a psychologist or counsellor seemed really awkward and scary to me before I went. But I found it to be way more helpful than I'd first thought it would be. Just putting the situation out to be discussed can be really helpful. Counsellors and psychologists do have really good ideas for how to cope with difficult situations. If you think you might have any of the anxiety disorders listed below, you should see a psychologist or counsellor. The sooner you get onto these issues, the easier it will be to sort them out. The easiest way to see a psychologist is to go through your GP, who will refer you to a psychologist or may even be able to help you yourselves.

How does it work?

- Telling someone what's upsetting you can help you sort through your feelings
- Talking to someone can help put things into perspective and may suggest options you hadn't thought of before
- Talking through your worries can help you let go of stress and tension that has built up
- If you have depression or anxiety, getting the right type of help, and getting it early, can make it much easier for you to get back on track

It could be helpful to remember the following tips if you're thinking of seeing someone about your anxiety or stress

- Deciding who you want to talk to is the first step. The most important thing is that you find someone you trust and feel comfortable with.
- There isn't any reason why you can't talk to more than one person about how you are feeling. If you decide to speak to a counsellor or doctor, you can take a friend along with you.
- To find a doctor or counsellor, ask friends or family, or look at one of the websites listed below.
- You usually need to make an appointment before you see a doctor or counsellor – you don't have to say why.
- To get a refund from Medicare, take your Medicare card (or number) and any concession card with you and keep your invoice or receipt if they don't bulk bill.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or to ask the doctor or counsellor to explain something again.
- Be honest about your feelings, thoughts, situation and lifestyle so that you get the best possible help.
- Remember that your doctor can only share information about you with anyone else if they believe you or someone else is at risk of serious harm.
- If you're not comfortable with the counsellor or doctor, it's okay to find someone else.
- In Australia, most of the cost of seeing a psychologist and doctor is covered by the government
- Remember, if you need to talk to someone right now, call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Kids Help Line on 1800 55 1800.