

RECONNECTING AFTER LOCKDOWN

TIPS FOR REBUILDING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS
& KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE



Social connectedness is important for our mental health and wellbeing, but for a lot of people, lifting of restrictions and increasing social activities might be cause for some anxiety. We've developed some tips and strategies to help yourself, and those you love, ease back into socialising and rebuild social connections in a way that keeps you feeling comfortable and safe.

TIPS TO CONSIDER FOR YOURSELF

1. Know what you are comfortable with, and do things in stages. Start with low risk activities like an outdoor picnic or going for a walk.
2. Try not to over commit and stagger your social activities, giving yourself "lay-days" in between.
3. Communicate to others what you are ready for. It's ok to let someone know that you aren't ready for hugging or handshakes yet, and it's important that they respect that.
4. Arm yourself with accurate and evidence based health facts from government and medical sources so that you can make informed decisions about what is right for you.
5. Talk to a trusted friend or family member about how you are feeling. If you are finding that your anxiety does not reduce over time or becomes overwhelming, there are professional services like Lifeline or your GP, who you can talk to for some additional support.

Remember: It's ok to change your mind. Case numbers, vaccine doses, crowd numbers, even the weather can influence your decision. If any of these change so that you no longer feel comfortable, its ok to ask for a raincheck or to reschedule.



TIPS FOR SOMEONE YOU KNOW

1. Don't make assumptions. Just because restrictions have eased, does not mean that everyone has stopped worrying about COVID. Ask what they are ready for, and make sure you respect their boundaries.
2. Keep inviting them, but let them know you understand why they might not want to come. This will reinforce that you want to stay connected with them and make them feel less alone.
3. Offer COVID safe options like outdoor gatherings, meeting up in smaller groups, wearing a mask or taking a Rapid Antigen Test beforehand.
4. Keep lines of communication open. Try to keep up the face-time and phone calls until they feel ready to start attending face-to-face social activities.
5. If you are worried about their wellbeing and they aren't comfortable talking to you about it, encourage them to contact a professional service so they can get the support they need.

Where to get help

If you feel like your anxiety is becoming overwhelming or have concerns about someone you love, call one of the following numbers for professional mental health support.

- Lifeline - 13 11 14
- Beyond Blue - 1300 224 636

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