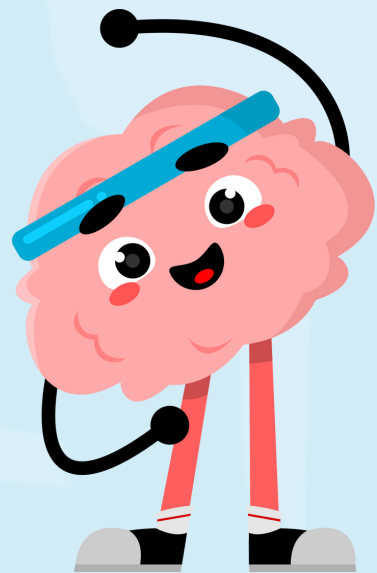


Let's talk about **mental health**

What is mental health?

Mental health is about how we feel and think inside our heads. Just like we take care of our bodies, it's important to look after our feelings and thoughts too!

Everyone has mental health! Mental health is about how we feel emotionally, how we think, and how we interact with others. It has a big impact on our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours.



Do we need to look after our mental health?

Taking care of our mental health is just as important as looking after our bodies.

When we feel good inside our heads, it helps us handle feelings, solve problems, and enjoy life more. It's like giving our brains a big, warm hug!

Just like eating healthy and playing keeps our bodies strong, taking care of our feelings and thoughts helps us stay happy and strong on the inside.



How can I look after my mental health?

Taking care of your mental health is like taking care of your feelings and thoughts to help you feel good inside. Here are some things you can do:



Eat Healthy Snacks!

Try to eat lots of fruit and vegetables.



Share your feelings!

With an adult you trust.



Sleep!

Make sure you go to sleep on time.



Be active!

Play sports, go for a walk or dance.



Be creative!

Try arts and crafts, drawing, build with lego.



Play!

Play your favourite games.



Be social!

Spend time with family and friends.



Go outside!

Spend time in the sunshine.

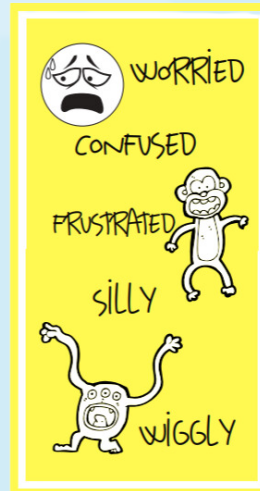
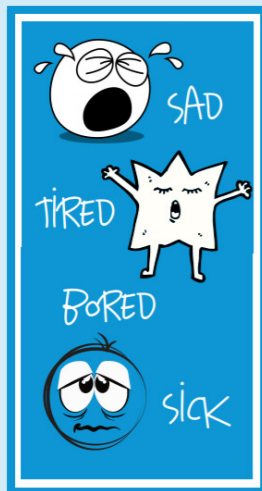


Ask for help if you need it.

How many of these things do you do for your mental health?

Let's talk about **emotions**

At Kookaburra Kids, we use the Kookazones to help us to understand our emotions. Emotions are like clues that tell you what your mind and body need. When we understand and listen to our emotions, we can look after our mental health.



Blue zone

Your mind and body are telling you that you need some time to rest.

Green zone

Your mind and body are telling you that it is time to go and do things.

Yellow zone

Your mind and body are telling you that it's time to slow down.

Red zone

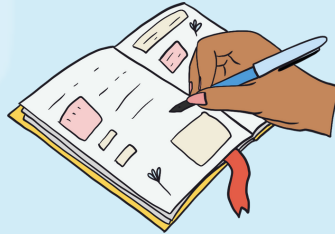
Your mind and body are telling you that it is time to stop and cool down.

How can I get back to the **green zone**?

To get back into the green zone, where you can play, learn and spend time with others, you can:



Listen to music.



Draw or write down how you are feeling.



Drink water.



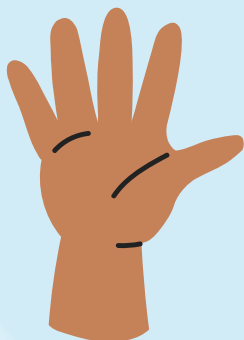
Take a 5 minute break.



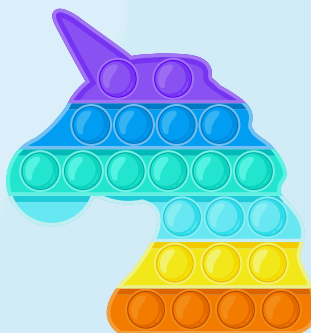
Take 5 deep breaths.



Stretch.



Count backwards from 20 to 1.



Use a fidget toy.



Talk to someone you trust.

How many of these ideas have you tried?



Let's talk about **depression**

What is depression?



Depression is a feeling of being very sad and down for a long time. It's more than just feeling sad after a bad day or because of a specific reason. It's like having a cloud over you that makes everything seem grey, even when the sun is shining.

What is it like to have depression?

When someone has depression, they might:

- feel tired and like they have no energy all of the time
- feel guilty, like they did something wrong (even though they didn't)
- get really frustrated or angry more quickly than they used to
- have trouble concentrating on things
- feel like they want to hurt themselves or die
- not want to do things that they like to do anymore





Why can't people just not be depressed?



Just like our bodies can feel unwell, our emotions and thoughts can, too. It's important to remember that having depression isn't anyone's fault, and it's something that many people can get help for to feel better.

How do some people get depression?

Scientists don't fully understand why people get depression, but some people with depression might have it because they:

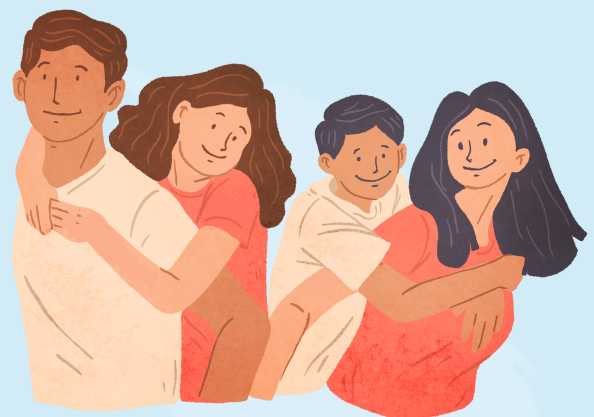
- have more stress in their life than they are able to deal with
- have had a traumatic experience in their life, like someone they love dying, having an illness or being injured
- lost their job or are having problems with money, alcohol or drugs

Can people with depression get better?

Yes. People with depression can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with depression might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to look after their brain.

They might need to take medication, try activities they enjoy or even have to stay in hospital for a little while. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of learning to live with depression.



Let's talk about **PTSD**

What is PTSD?

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is a mental health condition that can develop in people who have experienced trauma. This could be a life-threatening situation, a natural disaster, abuse, or any event that was very distressing or worrying. Sometimes PTSD can be a build up of experiencing lots of traumatic events over a long time.



What does it look like when someone has PTSD?

When someone has PTSD, they might:

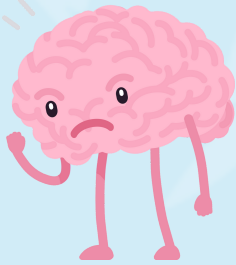
- have flashbacks where they remember the traumatic event.
- have nightmares or upsetting dreams.
- feel on edge or irritable.
- feel numb or guilty.
- having trouble spending time with people they love
- avoid places or things that remind them of their trauma.



How do some people get PTSD?

PTSD is a natural response to stress and trauma. When someone goes through a traumatic event, their brain may form lasting memories of the event, and their body's fight or flight system can become confused. With help, people can learn cope with their traumatic experiences.

Why can't people with PTSD forget their bad or traumatic memories?



In people with PTSD, the brain doesn't process traumatic memories the same way it does with other memories. Usually, our brains take experiences and turn them into memories that can fade over time.

But with traumatic events, the memories can be so intense and frightening that they get stuck in the brain. Instead of fading, they keep coming back, sometimes even when the person doesn't want them to.

Can people with PTSD get better?

Yes. People with PTSD can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with PTSD might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to look after their brain.



They might need to take medication, have a regular routine or even have to stay in hospital for a little while. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of learning to live with PTSD.

Let's talk about **bipolar disorder**

What is bipolar disorder?

Bipolar disorder is a mental health condition where a person experiences extreme mood swings that are more than the usual normal ups and downs all people experience. People with bipolar can have:

1. **Manic Episodes:** During these times, a person might feel overly excited, have lots of energy, talk really fast, have racing thoughts, and do things impulsively without thinking about the consequences. They might also have trouble sleeping but not feel tired.
2. **Depressive Episodes:** In these phases, a person feels very sad, loses interest in things they used to enjoy, feels tired or low on energy, has trouble concentrating, and might have changes in how much they eat or sleep.

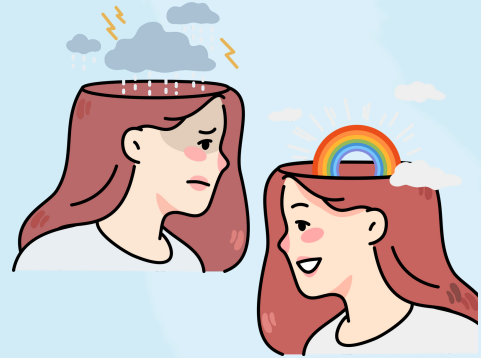
What is it like to have bipolar disorder?

It affects the way a person's moods go up and down. Imagine a roller coaster ride: sometimes you feel really, really happy and full of energy, like you're on top of the world (mania). But then, there are times when you might feel really sad, tired, and not interested in doing things you usually enjoy (depression) It's like when you feel super tired after playing a lot and just want to rest.



Why can't people just control their emotions?

Everyone has trouble managing their emotions every now and again. People with bipolar disorder experience these big mood swings. It's important to know that it's not something they can control on their own. It's like their feelings are on a bit of a wild ride.



How do some people get bipolar disorder?

Bipolar disorder doesn't have a single cause—it's more like a mix of different things coming together. One part might be how the brain works. Sometimes, the way certain parts of the brain function or the chemicals inside it can lead to big mood swings.

Another part could be life experiences. When someone goes through really tough times or big changes, it can sometimes trigger these strong emotions.

Can people with bipolar disorder get better?

Yes. People with bipolar can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with bipolar might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to look after their brain.



They might need to take medication, have a regular routine or even have to stay in hospital for a little while. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of learning to live with PTSD.

Let's talk about schizophrenia

What is schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia is a mental health condition that can make people have **hallucinations**, **delusions** or **psychosis**.

- A **hallucination** is when someone can see, hear, smell or feel things that aren't really there.
- A **delusion** is an odd or unusual belief that someone thinks is true - even when it's not.
- **Psychosis** is when someone thinks something is real - even when it isn't.



What is it like to have schizophrenia?

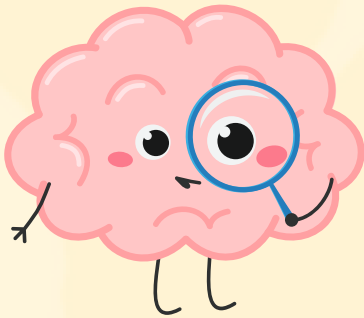


It can be very stressful and confusing to have schizophrenia.

Imagine if you sometimes thought you heard a bell ringing, even when there wasn't a bell around. Or maybe you really believed you had a special power, like being able to fly like a superhero.

For people with schizophrenia, these things can feel very real to them, even though they're not happening in the same way for everyone else.

Is it just people making things up?



No. It's important to remember that people with schizophrenia aren't just "making things up" or pretending. Their brains work a little differently, which can make them experience things in a way that might be hard for others to understand.

How do people get schizophrenia?

Schizophrenia isn't something you can catch off someone. The reasons why people get schizophrenia are complicated, but scientists think that some people are born with differences in the way **neurotransmitters** work in their brain. **Neurotransmitters** are like little text messages that send information to different parts of the brain. When these don't work like they should, people can have schizophrenia.

Can people with schizophrenia get better?

Yes. People with schizophrenia can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with schizophrenia might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to look after their brain.

They might need to take medication, have a regular routine or even have to stay in hospital for a little while. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of learning to live with schizophrenia.



Let's talk about eating disorders

What are eating disorders?

Eating disorders are serious mental health conditions that affect a person's thoughts about food, eating, and their own body.

People with eating disorders might:

- worry about the food they are eating
- avoid eating meals with family or friends
- have mood swings where their emotions change a lot or really quickly
- feel dizzy, tired or faint
- have problems with their teeth



What is it like to have an eating disorder?

Sometimes, people with eating disorders feel really worried or upset about how they look or about eating certain foods.



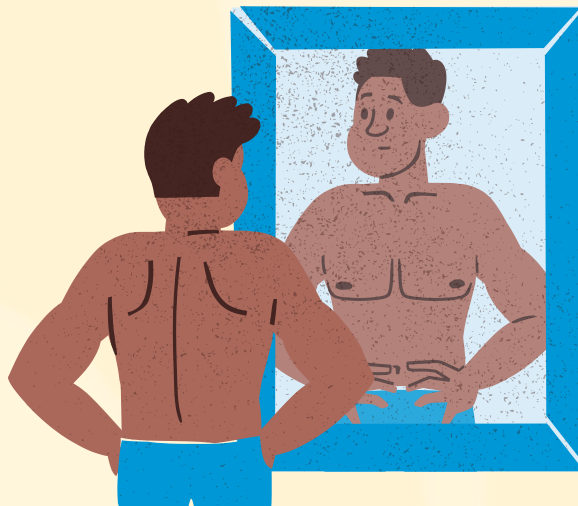
It's like having strong thoughts and feelings that make it hard for them to eat like everyone else does or to feel good about their bodies. They might need special help and support to feel better about eating and feeling good in their bodies, just like when we need help from grown-ups when things are really tough.

How do people get eating disorders?

Eating disorders can happen for different reasons, and it's a mix of things that might lead someone to develop one.

Some reasons include:

1. Big life changes, tough situations, or high stress
2. Feeling pressure to look a certain way or being influenced by images on social media that show an "ideal" body can affect how someone feels about their own body and food.



3. Some people might have certain personality traits, like anxiety, that could contribute to developing an eating disorder.

Can people with eating disorders get better?

Yes. People with eating disorders can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with eating disorders might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to look after their brain and body.



They might need to take medication, have a special eating plan or even have to stay in hospital for a little while. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of learning to live with an eating disorder.

Let's talk about **substance use**

What is substance use?

Substance use is when people sometimes use certain things like alcohol, vaping or drugs because it makes them feel different. It's important to understand that these things can be harmful for your physical and mental health.



What are some signs of substance use disorders?

People who are vaping or using alcohol or drugs might

- have sudden changes in behaviour like becoming moody, angry, upset or secretive
- have physical changes such as bloodshot eyes, pupil size, weight changes
- miss school, sports, clubs or work
- change friendship groups
- have a drastic change in their routine
- have problems with money.



Why can't people just stop drinking alcohol, smoking, vaping or using drugs?

Sometimes, when people start drinking alcohol, smoking, or using drugs, their bodies get used to having them. It's like when you really like eating your favorite snack every day. You get so used to having it that your body starts to expect it and wants more.

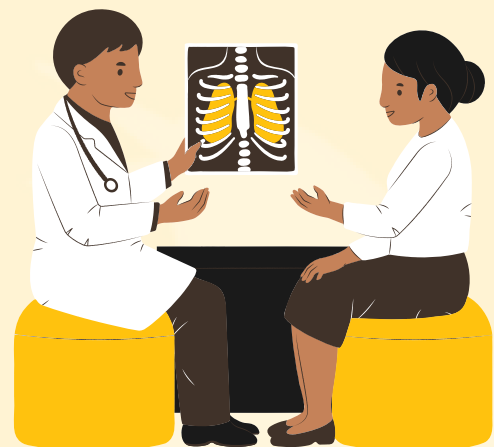
These things can also make people feel a certain way, like making them feel happy or less worried for a little bit. So, when they try to stop, it's really hard because their body and brain got used to having it and feeling a certain way.



Can people with substance use get better?

Yes. People with substance use disorders can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with substance use disorders might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to stop smoking, vaping, drinking or using drugs.



They might need to take medication, have a routine or even have to stay in hospital for a little while. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of getting help for substance use disorders.

Let's talk about **anxiety**

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling that everyone gets sometimes. It's like when you're about to take a big test, go on stage, or meet new people. Your heart might beat a little faster, and you might feel a bit nervous. That's completely normal!



What is generalised anxiety disorder?

For some people, they feel this nervousness a lot, even when there isn't a big test or performance happening. It's like their body is giving them a "worried" feeling even when there's no clear reason to be worried. When this happens for a long time we call it generalised anxiety disorder.

What are some signs of anxiety?

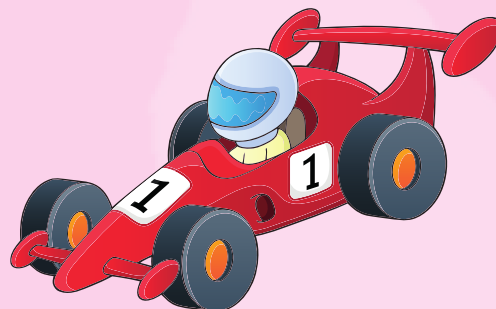
People with anxiety might:

- have uncontrollable worry lots of different things
- sweat, be shaky, have a fast heart beat
- have trouble concentrating
- feel irritable or like you're about to explode
- feel restless and having trouble sleeping
- be unable to calm down



Why can't people just calm down?

When someone feels anxious, it's like their mind and body are in a race car going really fast. They might try to calm down, but it's tough because their thoughts are spinning around and their body might feel shaky or scared.



Anxiety isn't like feeling worried about one thing—it's more like feeling worried a lot, even about things that might not be scary for others. It's like their brain hits the worry button, and it's hard to turn it off.

But just like learning to slow down a fast race car takes practice, there are ways to help calm anxiety, like taking deep breaths.

Can people with generalised anxiety disorder get better?

Yes. People with generalised anxiety disorder can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with generalised anxiety disorder might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to cope with stress and be calmer.



They might need to take medication, have a routine or even have to stay in hospital for a little while. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of getting help for generalised anxiety disorder.

Let's talk about **social anxiety**

What is social anxiety?

When someone feels extremely nervous and self-conscious in social situations. It can be hard for them to talk to people, make friends, or even do everyday activities in front of others.



Sometimes it can even make it difficult for people to go to school or work because their mind is focused on negative thoughts about what could go wrong or what people might think or say.

What are some signs of social anxiety?

People with social anxiety disorder might:

- be scared of situations where they think others might judge them
- worry that they will be embarrassed, judged or rejected by others.
- crying or freeze up when thinking about or being in social situations
- avoid social situations
- worrying that they look too anxious



Is it just people making things up?

No. It's not something they're making up—it's a feeling that can be really big and make things hard for them. Imagine feeling like there are butterflies in your tummy when you have to talk to lots of people—that's how it can feel for someone with social anxiety.



How do people get social anxiety disorder?

Some people might get social anxiety disorder because they're really shy or had a scary experience before. It's like their brain gets extra worried about these things, but with help and practice, they can feel better about being in social places.

Can people with social anxiety disorder get better?

Yes. People with social anxiety disorder can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with social anxiety disorder might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to cope with stress and be calmer in social situations.



They might need to take medication or practice being in social situations with more people. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of getting help for social anxiety disorder.

Let's talk about **OCD**

What is OCD?

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is a mental health condition where a person has repeated thoughts about things they find worrying or distressing.



These thoughts can become obsessions. To try and feel less worried by their thoughts, people with OCD might have compulsions. These are special rituals or habits that help them to feel better, but often make it hard for them to live their life.

What is it like to have OCD?

Imagine that you were really worried about your house burning down - so worried that you just couldn't think about anything else.

Then you had the thought that if you counted all of the doors in your house again and again until you counted a safe number, everything would be ok and your house would be safe.

This could even take hours of your day meaning you miss out on doing things you enjoy.



Is it just people making things up?



No. OCD isn't something people make up. It's a real condition where someone has thoughts or worries that keep coming back and make them feel really anxious or scared. It's not something they choose to have—it's a real challenge that can affect their daily life.

How do people get OCD?

Sometimes, when someone's brain works in a special way, they might get thoughts that keep coming back again and again, making them feel worried or scared. It's a bit like when a song gets stuck in your head. These thoughts can make them do things again and again, like washing hands many times or checking things a lot. It's not something they choose—it's just how their brain works.

Can people with OCD get better?

Yes. People with OCD can live happy and meaningful lives where they can work towards their goals.

Sometimes, people with obsessive compulsive disorder might need help from doctors or psychiatrists who can teach them how to cope with stress and look after their thoughts and feelings.



They might need to take medication, have a routine or even have to stay in hospital for a little while. It's ok if this happens though, it is all part of getting help for OCD.