# **STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH CHANGE**

Change, particularly if the change was sudden, unexpected, and unwanted, can bring with it a range of difficult thoughts and emotions. Here are some tips to help to **ADAPT** to the change:

## An icon of 2 hands holding a heart **A**ccept your feelings

Everyone has a different emotional response to change and there is no right or wrong way to feel. How you feel is how

you feel right now. It is common and reasonable for people to have strong initial responses to news about change, especially if a change is unwanted, sudden, and personally meaningful; for most people these responses settle over days and weeks.

Strategy: Reflect on past instances of change and think about the thoughts and actions that have been helpful for you in coming to terms with it.

## An icon of a head with cogs **D**evelop healthy coping

We often wait to feel better or more motivated before doing something. When we are feeling uprooted by an unexpected change, we cannot wait on our brain to give us motivation to get out there and do things. Sometimes we need to make the decision to do an activity first for our emotions to change.

Strategies:

* Maintaining good physical self-care including exercise, healthy nutrition, sleep, meditation, and relaxed breathing exercises.
* Developing helpful and realistic perspectives about the situation by speaking to others you can trust and who might be going through / or have gone through a similar experiences.
* Expressing your feelings through journalling and other forms of creative expression.
* Making a list of things you feel you have lost because of the change with options of how to make up for or accept these losses can also be helpful. Think about what you can still be grateful for. It is important to avoid any substance or activity that could bring harm to your health and wellbeing during this time.
* Consider the people, places, activities, and things that help you to cope with difficult feelings and actively seek them out.

## An icon of 2 people **A**dditional supports

Asking for and accepting support from others helps

people to adapt to change more effectively. Remember that everyone will need support at some point in their lives, and it is not a sign of weakness; it shows that you are being proactive about your recovery. Most of the time, people are more than willing to assist. Important contacts for additional support are on the next page and remember that the information that you share with external support services is private and confidential (unless there is a serious safety risk).

Strategy: Please consider speaking to your Sport’s Wellbeing Manager as a first point of contact

## An icons of a document task list **P**lans, goals, structure, and routines

Regaining and maintaining a sense of normal can help people to cope with change – it reinforces the idea that change can happen, but you can also still do things you usually do.

Strategies:

* Maintain usual routines – e.g., have that morning coffee or tea as you always do
* Develop a weekly planner of healthy, positive, and meaningful activities
* Reorient yourself with your Individual Performance Plan and consider having a conversation with your coach and support staff about these performance goals if significant change has taken place
* Consider what else you can do to help give you a sense of structure and routine in your day

**T**ake your time



Adjusting to big changes takes time and although you may need to maintain the same training demands, try and give yourself a break in others ways like focusing your attention on positive and pleasant experiences, using relaxed breathing and encouraging self-talk, and being self-compassionate by

reminding yourself that your feelings are reasonable, others are feeling this too and that reaching out for support is acceptable.

This information sheet was adapted from the Australian Psychological Society’s Information Sheet on Promoting Safety, Comfort and Help after Disasters

# **Important contacts**

Below are some key resources to support you - please note the information and resources on their websites!

Please consider your Sport’s AW&E Manager / Performance & Lifestyle Advisor / Wellbeing Manager as a first point of contact.

**In the event of an emergency, please call 000.**

## **AIS Mental Health Referral Network**

Mental health support for eligible athletes, coaches, and support staff members.

[www.ais.gov.au/mhrn](http://www.ais.gov.au/mhrn)

02 6214 1130

[mentalhealth@ausport.gov.au](mailto:mentalhealth@ausport.gov.au)

## **AIS Career Practitioner Referral Network**

Professional career advice and guidance services for Australia’s elite athletes.

[www.ais.gov.au/career-and-education/cprn](http://www.ais.gov.au/career-and-education/cprn) [careerandeducation@ausport.gov.au](mailto:careerandeducation@ausport.gov.au)

## **13 YARN**

24/7 free, confidential, and professional yarning opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Lifeline Trained Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Crises Supporters.

13 92 76

[www.13yarn.org.au](http://www.13yarn.org.au/)

## **Lifeline**

24/7 free crisis counselling and online suicide prevention support.

13 11 14

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

## **Kids Helpline**

24/7 free telephone and online counselling for children and young people (5-25 years)

1800 551 800 24

<kidshelpline.com.au>

## **MensLine Australia**

24/7 free telephone and online counselling for Australian men

1300 78 99 78

<mensline.org.au>

## **SANE Australia**

Free telephone and online support to individuals affected by complex mental health issues as well as those caring for them

1800 187 263 (weekdays, 10am – 10pm)

[www.sane.org](http://www.sane.org/)

## **QLife**

Free telephone and online support services for people who identify as LGBTQIA+ and those supporting them

1800 184 527 (all week, 3pm – 12am)

<qlife.org.au>

## **Directline**

24/7 free telephone and online alcohol and other drug counselling for individuals in Victoria

1800 888 236

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

## **MyCompass**

Free, interactive, and scientifically backed web-based mental health self-help program

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

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