

**RELEASE  
RESPOND  
RETHINK**

# **RELEASE RESPOND RETHINK**

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**“Stress is  
not what  
happens to us.  
It’s our  
response  
to what  
happens.  
And response is  
something,  
we can choose.”**

**Maureen Killoran**

# Release

Tension builds up in our bodies. You may notice your muscles tense up or your heart rate increase. You may experience headaches, irritability, restlessness or fatigue. These may be indicators of tension. Learn to recognise your own symptoms and how you can release this build-up.

‘Release’ is all about letting go of tension and stress. This can be done either actively or passively. Active release can include anything from rock-climbing to playing team sports, whereas passive release can include meditation or art. There are many simple strategies and tips that can be employed to help release tension and reduce stress.

## Release at play:

- Go for a run or get some other exercise
- Go swimming
- Enjoy an activity with loved ones or with friends
- Take up a hobby
- Play a game instead of watching TV
- Share a joke with friends
- Indulge in a weekend away

## Release at work:

- Get up from your desk at regular intervals
- Enjoy a hot drink and five minute break
- Take a workmate out to lunch
- Keep your favourite pictures framed on your desk or wall
- Take time to greet your colleagues
- Have get-togethers after work
- Don't be afraid to ask for help
- Try to get outside at least once a day for some fresh air and a walk

## **Community relationships can help you release stress:**

- Participate in a local team sport
- Discover local parks or cycling tracks
- Join a local meditation or tai chi group
- Visit an art gallery or a public library
- Make use of your local public swimming pool
- Attend classes to learn a new skill
- Start a laughter group

## **Respond**

'Respond' is all about building your resilience with healthy, active behaviour. It encompasses taking positive steps to facilitate a healthy lifestyle. It is all about identifying your needs and then responding to these. A small action can often have a significant positive effect on your wellbeing.

Some tips and strategies for ways to respond include:

### **Respond at play:**

- Take time to connect with friends
- Avoid over-use of alcohol and other drugs (including tobacco) to cope
- Take time to exercise
- Care for your own personal needs
- Eat well and learn about good nutrition
- Drink plenty of water
- Increase your social circle – join a club, group or class
- Share your skills – volunteer

### **Respond at work:**

- Learn assertive communication skills
- Look for constructive feedback
- Enjoy healthy meals at work
- Have herbal tea instead of coffee
- Don't be afraid to ask your colleagues for ideas or opinions to help you





- Focus on potential achievements, or what inspires you, rather than your fear of failure
- Congratulate yourself or co-workers for a job well done

### **Respond to your community in a healthy, active way:**

- Perform a random act of kindness every day
- Schedule more fun with others
- Ask for help and reciprocate
- Pay someone a compliment at least once every day
- Volunteer with a local community group
- Learn assertive communication skills
- Use public transport and talk to the people you regularly see
- Invite the neighbours over for a healthy meal

## **Rethink**

Your feelings are created by your thoughts and how you interpret events. Sometimes negative thinking may get in the way of seeing a situation realistically.

'Rethink' is about challenging your thoughts and views. It incorporates changing our Automatic Negative Thoughts (ANTs) to Positive Enabling Thoughts (PETs) through simple strategies and tips.

### **Rethink at play:**

- Look at the bright side in every situation
- Appreciate yourself
- Applaud your friends and family
- Take time to meditate
- Express your thoughts – write them down
- Surround yourself with people that think positively
- Do activities that you enjoy

### **Rethink at work:**

- Monitor unrealistic negative thinking, e.g. overgeneralising with 'always' and 'everything'
- View situations as challenges, not chores



- Avoid blaming yourself or others
- Imagine the satisfaction of completing your task
- Think about what you can do, rather than what you can't
- Share your achievements with your colleagues
- Learn how to handle stress

### **Help yourself and others to rethink:**

- Look for the positive people in your environment
- Try to find and focus on the strengths in your community
- Give your favourite teacher or nurse a flower
- Avoid blaming yourself or the people around you
- Look for opportunities where all can benefit
- Look for solutions instead of problems
- Acknowledge and support positive leaders in your community.

# Where do I go for help?

## **The WayAhead Directory**

is an online resource providing a comprehensive list of mental health related services in NSW.

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

## **Phone Lines**

**WayAhead Mental Health  
Information Line**

**1300 794 991**



Translating & Interpreting Service  
(TIS) 131 450

Please call the Mental Health  
Information Line through the  
Telephone Interpreter Service  
(TIS). Free to Australian citizens or  
permanent residents.

## Disclaimer

This information is for educational purposes. As neither brochures nor websites can diagnose people it is always important to obtain professional advice and/or help when needed.

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The Association encourages feedback and welcomes comments about the information provided.

*Last reviewed by Jamie Saltoon 2017*

**“ I found people who  
understood exactly what I  
was going through ”**



