



## QCWA “Bouncing Back to Wellness”

Since 1922 the QCWA has been there to help rural, remote and regional Queenslanders through tough times. The QCWA is renowned for practical, caring assistance to those in need. We also believe that people under severe stress need support, a friendly ear and some assistance to get through the hard times and not become overwhelmed by their current circumstances.

‘Bouncing Back to Wellness’ is our way of helping individuals and communities get back on their feet. The following suggestions offer a series of practical, achievable ways to promote a positive attitude. Keep in mind that because of their generic nature, not all of them will be relevant to everyone. Just pick one that relates to your circumstances and work on doing that. Once you have mastered that one – pick another. (*For day-to-day reminders we have included a “Fridge List” for you.*) These suggestions are a place to start in the effort to keep moving forward...

### Try these “Bouncing Back to Wellness” ideas before, during and after difficult times

- Importantly, please tell yourself ‘you are not the first person to feel as you do’. No matter your circumstances, some-one, somewhere may have been through something similar.
- *Nothing is so bad you cannot tell someone about it. If you don't have someone in your immediate circle you feel you can talk to, find someone else. Lifeline (131114) and Beyondblue (1300224636) are good places to start. They can often suggest others who may be able to help.*
- If you are experiencing financial difficulties contact the company you owe the money to, as soon as you realise there will be a problem. They all have special arrangements they can make for people in need. The sooner you apply the easier it will be to make an arrangement to allow the debt to be paid off. All the Banks, power suppliers, water boards, ‘phone companies, Councils can make these arrangements – but you need to make the phone call to set it in motion.
- *It didn't take 2 minutes to get to where you are today, so it is not going to be a quick and easy thing to fix. If you try to fix everything at once you probably won't succeed – so, try one thing at a time.*
- When going over the day in your mind, note the things you achieved, did better at, or can think of a better way of doing next time. Put those you didn't get to on the list for another day.
- *Remember the old song and “Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative and don't mess with Mr In Between”. Choose to see the “glass is half full” in all situations.*
- There can be a funny or positive side to things – practice finding it and learn to enjoy the moment. Remember the old adage – “Laughter is the best medicine” - it has a lot of truth to it.
- *How we deal with the day depends on our state of mind. Try to begin the day with a light heart and a smile, a chuckle and a pat on the back. Every time you are about to speak (especially when answering the phone) try to smile, it can make a difference.*
- Remember to count your blessings often – Family, friends, good books, comfy chair, beautiful sunset, loyal dog, cold drink, good food, dry bed etc. See how many blessings you can get. (If you are feeling very down write a list and keep adding to it as you think of another one.) In our society we tend to take for granted simple things people in other countries yearn for e.g. a safe place to sleep, clean water. Remind yourself of the simple pleasures/advantages you do have.
- *Collect positive messages and photographs and read/look at them often. Set up a pinboard.*
- Laugh out loud often. Seek out people, items, movies etc that make you laugh.
- *Get singing happy songs. Sing loud and often – even if you don't do it well – do it with enthusiasm. Join a choir or singing group if you can. If you prefer to whistle – then whistle instead or as well as sing.*
- Remember every day has the potential to bring you closer to your goals and a step up out of your problems. Be open to what the day presents to you.



- *See problems as opportunities to learn and expand your skills base. As a baby you wanted to be able to reach more things than you could when lying on your back in your cot, so you started to roll, then sit up and then walk. Keep doing that all your life - strive for things seemingly just out of reach and find a way to get them.*
- *People come into your life to teach you something. Be open to learning the lessons they present. (Sometimes it may just be how to deal with someone as difficult as they are.)*
- *When dealing with a problem, try to find out as much as you can before deciding on a course of action. (The internet can be a great help here, though occasionally, it's more confusing) Think of someone who you admire and think "What would they do in this situation?" If you know them well enough to phone them and ask- do so. (You don't necessarily have to do what they say - it just adds to your knowledge and may offer another alternative.) The old adage of "a problem shared is a problem halved" is often not far off the mark. So **talk to someone** - a friend, colleague, family member, Lifeline or Beyondblue.*
- *Only **you** can change things for yourself. Remember the 10 most important two letter words "**If it is to be, it is up to me.**"*
- *If you wish for something you sit and wait for it to happen - but when you really want something you find a way to make it happen. Get creative - there is more than one way to achieve most things.*
- *See a mistake as just a learning experience. For a different result - do it differently.*
- *Never give up. You can't usually control what happens in your life, but you can control how you respond. Decide you are going to make the most of what is thrown your way.*
- *The most inspirational people in the world are ones who overcame adversity - not the ones who had a 'cushy ride'.*
- *If you don't think you can help yourself, start to help others. In doing this, the answer to your problem may present itself or the problem may dissolve. Become a volunteer in your Community and share the skills you have with others. Join QCWA, the local Men's Shed or any other Community Service or Church organisation in your area. Become part of a phone chat support group for others/elderly, become a hospital visitor - the list is endless, even for those living outside of town or in a remote area.*
- *Take time to exercise. Go for an early morning walk (the best time of the day), get on that exercise bike, join a gym, take up yoga - stretch. Exercise releases "feel good" chemicals in your brain.*
- *Relax - spoil yourself- have some 'me time'. It is guaranteed to lift the spirits. (It does not have to be for a long period of time - even 15 minutes can make a world of difference.) For online self-help options try: [mindspot.org.au](http://mindspot.org.au); [bluepages.anu.edu.au](http://bluepages.anu.edu.au); and [mycompass.org.au](http://mycompass.org.au). All offer evidenced based information and support.*
- *If after a couple of weeks of trying these suggestions, you are still feeling down, consider talking to someone in a professional capacity. You can call Lifeline (131114), Beyondblue Support Service (1300224636) or go online: [mentalhealthonline.org.au](http://mentalhealthonline.org.au). Don't wait to seek professional help - "Nip it in the bud" by doing it sooner than later.*
- *Put our "Bouncing Back to Wellness" list on your fridge or notice board to remind yourself of things you can do. (See the last page.)*

*Every accomplishment  
starts with a decision  
to try.*



### ***How to help a mate "Bounce Back to Wellness"***

- Share these documents with them. Say something like "I find these really helpful so I thought you might also find them of use for yourself or someone you know."
- Talk to them regularly. It does not have to be for a long time. (A daily 2minute chat is better than an hour once a month.) Remember to tell them you care about them.
- Share funny jokes and stories with them. Get them laughing.
- Invite them to 'drop in' to see you when they are feeling down, or join you for an outing. (Can be a simply walk – does not have to involve expense.)
- Ask for their help or advice on things they would know about.
- If they ask for your help find a way or time that you can be there for them. Sometimes you can't do it when they ask, so instead of saying "No" say "I'd love to but can't do it then. Can we do it..." and suggest a different time.
- Recount/recall all the good things and good times in their life, with them.
- Remind them that even if they can't control the situation they are in, they still have great skills and qualities e.g. If they can't find a job it does not mean they are no longer a great mate, good parent or Spouse, great cook, mender of things etc (pick 3 or 4 that are suitable) it just means there are not enough jobs to go around right now. People in drought stress are still the same wonderful people they have always been they are just dealing with a Natural Disaster as best they can.
- Take a piece of paper A4 or foolscap size. Fold it over about 2 cm from the top. Then fold it back the other way another 2 cm down. Continue until you have used it all up. Take it to some friends and you all write on one of the sections something you like/admire about that person. Fill in all the spaces. (Some people might write more than one thing and it does not matter if several say the same thing. They don't sign it – just write the compliments.) Put a staple on one end so it looks like a fan. This is then a piece of "fan mail". Send it to your friend and tell them to read it often.

### ***How to help Communities "Bounce Back to Wellness" after a Natural Disaster***

- Don't send stuff – send money. **Sending 'stuff' does not help the community.** It is important that all the towns, and businesses in those towns, survive the drought (or fire, flood or cyclone) too. Organisations like the QCWA through their Public Rural Crisis Fund organise vouchers and store credit with the local businesses. So at least two families are helped with each donation – the person in need and the business owner and sometimes their staff. (To donate – fully tax deductible (and 100% distributed) go to <http://www.qcwa.org.au> and follow the prompts.)
- Visit one or more of the affected areas – for a weekend, or longer. Buy fuel and food, stay in the accommodation, patronise their businesses. Talk to the locals and see for yourself what great communities they have. Seek out local produce and find out if you can buy it in your hometown. A search at [www.queensland.com](http://www.queensland.com) is a great place to start. They even have some itineraries' worked out you may wish to try.
- If you want a guided tour, there are many to choose from. Search for "Outback Tours" or see your local travel agent. Maybe a group of you could go together.
- Become a volunteer for the "Blazeaid" camps that are set up in different areas of the State. Check out their website <http://www.blazeaid.com> They have a camp somewhere in our great State every year. Be part of it and make new friends, share your skills and make a positive difference in the lives of people in need.
- If you are a retired teacher or have light domestic skills to share, you might like to volunteer with VISE (Volunteers for Isolated Students Education) who have volunteers go for 6 week stints teaching the students on properties, or supporting the parents. This not only provides trained tuition for the school children it frees the mother to help in other areas. It also allows the volunteers to experience life on a property and see first hand what life is like for people in the outback. Check out their website at <http://www.vise.org.au>



## Quick reference guide to “Bounce Back to Wellness”

A short list of suggestions, choose the ones that suit you best.

### Just tackle one at a time

- *Count your blessings often – Family, friends, good books comfy chair, beautiful sunset, loyal dog, cold drink, good food, dry bed etc.*
- Collect positive messages and photographs and read/look at them often. Laugh and sing/whistle loudly every day.
- *Remember every day brings you closer to your goals.*
- See problems as opportunities to learn and expand your skills base. “What has this person/situation come to teach me?”
- *Talk to someone – especially if you have financial difficulties. Make that call. Don't let things build up until they overwhelm you. Tackle one thing at a time.*
- When dealing with a problem think of someone who you admire and think “What would they do in this situation?”
- *Tell yourself “If it is to be, it is up to me.”*
- Get creative – there is more than one way to do most things.
- *A mistake is just a learning experience. For a different result do it differently.*
- Never give up. You can't usually control what happens in your life, but you can control how it affects you. Look for the positives in everything.
- *The most inspirational people are ones who overcame adversity.*
- Help yourself by helping others. Join QCWA or the Men's Shed, volunteer in your Community.
- *Tell someone how you are feeling and don't be afraid to ask for help. (lifeline.... Beyond Blue.... or [mindspot.org.au](http://mindspot.org.au)*

*A mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it is not open.*

*Frank Zappa*

This QCWA “Bouncing Back to Wellness” document is not provided by an official mental health intervention program; it is a document designed to offer options and ideas for a self-help attitude as a preliminary response to struggle with stress and tough times. It has been developed for peer delivery, and comes with regular recommendations for higher level intervention, with specific options and services offered if required.