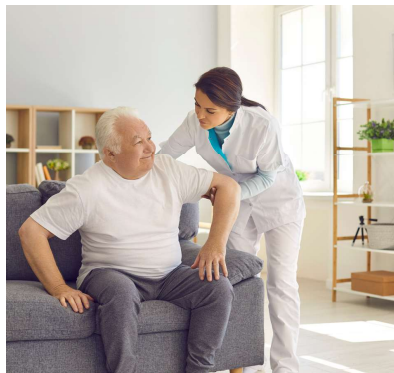


Companion Guide

A SUPPORT GUIDE FOR FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS & COMMUNITY

TOOLS TO HELP YOU NAVIGATE TOUGH TIMES

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SUPPORTING THE SUPPORTERS

Welcome

Thank you for taking time to explore another edition, and for taking time for you.

As time passes there are many emerging untold stories of kindness and generosity across our communities.

I have been out and about connecting with Community Halls and Progress Associations and hearing about the incredible work local volunteers do. Did you know many of these individuals wear multiple hats, often helping out with emergency services in addition to their roles running these groups, preparing and hosting community events, fundraising and so much more?

This issue is dedicated to all of these amazing souls who are often the touchstone in our communities and also lead the way applying for grants, liaising with gov'n bodies, and bringing events to your community. I'm sure many names come to mind.

According to Volunteering Australia ([2015 report](#)), those over 55 years old volunteer 80 hours per year, whilst those over 65 volunteer 104 hours per year. Similar findings were determined by a Giving Australia [2016](#) report where it was found that those over age 65 volunteered the most hours of any other group of Australians.

We acknowledge the incredible and courageous work of all volunteers, the Emergency Services, support agencies and charities.

When was the last time you thanked a community volunteer?

Behind the scenes and often forgotten about are our carers - family members supporting family with disability and chronic long term illness, all while trying to also navigate emergencies and the isolation of COVID.

This issue aims to shine a light on the support agencies who provide support, training and advocacy for this special group.

Self care for community leaders

Community leaders are a special breed of people, juggling additional demands on their time, to help organise local events, coordinate visiting services, apply for grants, provide leadership in emergency events, and manage community networks and communication. These same people are often tackling risks and emergencies on the front line. In a time of multiple emergency events and natural disasters of significant duration, fatigue is a pressing issue. Care of self, finding balance, and managing external stressors is critical to ensuring leadership is sustained. How do we do that?

The American Psychological Association writes about Stress management for leaders responding to a crisis and some Evidence-based techniques to handle stress and effectively lead.

[Stress management for leaders responding to a crisis \(apa.org\)](https://www.apa.org/leadership-topics/stress-management)

Here are some of their tips.

Recognize the physical warning signs of stress.

Everyone has different physical reactions to stress, such as stiff muscles, a headache, teeth grinding, and stomach aches. Pay attention to the physical symptoms to recognize stress. The physical signs are reminders to take time out for self-care.

Pause before making decisions, public announcements.

It's easy for leaders to get sucked into the frenetic nature of a crisis, feeling they always need to be fully responsive. However, pausing to reset and focus can contribute to better reception of a message or critical update. Leaders can adopt a routine of 5-10 minute breaks each hour to assess stress signals and emotional needs. Leadership communication requires messages delivered with calm confidence, and a few minutes is enough for leaders to take a break, take some breaths, and consider next steps.

Prioritize self-care.

To perform at their best for an extended time, leaders need to recharge, recover, and stay fueled. Research shows the importance of movement and exercise for improving mood and physical well-being. Leaders should prioritize restorative activities such as exercise, outdoor recreation, talking to friends and family, mediation or prayer, practicing deep breathing, supporting household activities like homework and meal preparation, and maintaining a proper diet.

Sleep.

With extended working hours, more demands, and increased worries, proper sleep becomes hard. Even for those who can function with less sleep, eventually, everyone hits a breaking point. Sleep quality also matters. Leaders can practice a pre-bedtime, wind-down routine that includes turning off computers or smartphones and refraining from email or news updates. Taking a warm shower before bed can help cool the body's temperature, physically preparing it for sleep.

Build time into the daily schedule for breaks.

Having a sense of control helps people cope with uncertainty and anxiety. When it feels impossible to manage every response or action during a crisis, leaders can focus more on controlling their day and routine. Leaders can block time to check in with individuals who may need extra care or attention, such as struggling employees or family and friends. Equally important is scheduling breaks for self-care and attending to personal and family needs.



Have trusted professional relationships, support.

When leaders can rely on staff or delegates to take on responsibilities, they get the headspace to look ahead and think strategically. Managing stress also helps keep moods and outlooks positive, which helps maintain relationships, communication, transparency, and trust.

Celebrate small wins and larger victories.

Leaders facing a crisis and feeling stressed may fixate on the negative aspect. But even in challenging situations, there are markers of success. Acknowledge and celebrate small wins and how leadership is making a difference. Recognizing the positive can boost mood, which can help leaders improve their flexibility, open-mindedness, and creativity.



Get involved

Touch base with your local Lions Club, Rotary, CWA, SES, Progress Association or Hall Committee to discuss opportunities to contribute. There are so many ways you can service your community, including running a BBQ at a local event, carrying out some minor maintenance at the local hall, gardening at a local memorial site, helping to run a phone tree during an emergency, applying for grants, distributing flyers in your neighbourhood, advocating for training or local events. The list is endless.

To find out contact details for a local organisation, association or charity in your area head to **My Directory** https://www.mycommunitydirectory.com.au/New_South_Wales



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

Are you ready to make a difference to your community?**Become a NSW RFS volunteer.**

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) is the world's largest volunteer fire service, made up of more than 70,000 dedicated volunteers right across NSW.

NSW RFS volunteers are ready to respond to emergencies 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round, attending a range of incidents from bush and grass fires to house and structure fires, road accidents and assisting at other events like floods, storms and searches.

Volunteering with the NSW RFS offers you the opportunity to learn new and valuable skills that will not only assist you in your voluntary role but in day to day life and even your workplace. It is also an opportunity to meet people you wouldn't normally meet. For many of our members, it's also about being part of a wonderful tradition and an organisation with a very proud history.

Head to - <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/join-the-nsw-rfs>

Training Opportunities

Community Managed Evacuation Centre Training: Tabulam



Red Cross and Kyogle Shire Council invite local community members and volunteers to a free half-day training session for the local Community Managed Evacuation Centre

Red Cross works with emergency services organisations, community members, government agencies, and volunteers around Australia and around the world to support communities to prepare for, and recover from, emergencies.

Red Cross has partnered with Kyogle Shire Council to deliver a free half-day training session on evacuation centre procedures for community members willing to volunteer in evacuation centres in Kyogle Shire.

The training will include information on the different roles in evacuation centres; supports and services available; and a range of other practical tips, tools and resources.

All Welcome - Please Join Us!!

Date: 31 March 2022
Time: 8.30am – 12.30pm
Venue: Tabulam Public Hall, 10 Barnes St, Tabulam
Food: Light refreshments will be provided
RSVP: By 24 March 2022 to scott.antcliff@kyogle.nsw.gov.au
 (including dietary preferences for catering purposes)
More info: Scott Antcliff, 02 6632 0211 or scott.antcliff@kyogle.nsw.gov.au



We are also running the same training at Woodenbong and Bonalbo (29 March), Wiangaree and Kyogle (30 March), and also at Mallanganee afternoon of 31 March. Reach out for more information.