

YOUR KIND OF HAPPY



HANG OUT WITH FRIENDS AND DO THINGS THAT MAKE YOU HAPPY.

Along your life's journey, it's important to find your happy places, spaces and people. They will all keep you on your path and give you peace and happiness in the good times and support when times get tough. Just like a garden, cultivate your own seeds of happiness and good mental health which is about wellness – not illness. Across the Stories Are Strong Project, everyone spoke of finding their kind of happy...

Find your tribe

We are all different, but our need for people who care for and support us in our lives is the same. Building meaningful relationships helps you to feel connected. Your tribe doesn't have to be your family of origin – it may be made up of close friends or extended family members – the only rule is that they love and support the real you – exactly as you are.

You may find your tribe through:

- Family
- Friends
- People who share your interests and beliefs
- Support groups
- Clubs
- Charities, community organisations or volunteering.

"If you don't have a good family, choose one, that's what I did. You need special people that care about you and love you to make life worth living. Enjoy the little things. It's okay to be happy with what you have. Everyone is striving for more, but I've just got a little house in the country and I'm happy."

Andrea – By My Side (Stories Are Strong)

Finding her tribe on that pivotal day set a new course for Helen. Since becoming involved in with the South Coast Inclusion Network she hasn't felt the need to leave and has found her happy place in Bass Coast with a new partner. "I love the beach and just being at home with my family and fur babies. This is home and I'm really glad now that I didn't leave."

Helen – Finding Your Tribe (Stories Are Strong)

Find your happy place

It can be as simple as patting your dog, watching TV on the couch or walking along a beach. Find your own places that make you happy and returning to them as often as you can – even in your mind.

I'm really boring! My happy place is being rolled up on the couch with my partner and watching a series on Netflix, that is how I look after myself.

Michelle Possingham, CEO, Lifeline Gippsland –Throwing Out A Lifeline
(Stories Are Strong)

Hang out with friends and do things that make you happy. I've got a few happy places, they're all my hobbies... playing the guitar, running, being outdoors I guess is my happy place on a broad scale is just acknowledging all of those little moments of my life that I'm happy – they're my happy place.

Sam – Healing Through Culture (Stories Are Strong)

“Having that engagement with the environment or finding a special place where we are at peace with ourselves is very important to assist in managing and regulating our moods.”

Terry – Broaden Your Horizon (Stories Are Strong)

“Spend a bit of time each day just being still and paying attention to what's going on in your head and heart.”

Terry – Broaden Your Horizon (Stories Are Strong)

Get back to nature

Nature offers solace with a beauty and power all of its own. Make time to connect and reflect in places that make you feel good and that ground you. Its power and energy can help you to relax and to see yourself in the big picture. Take time out for you and recognise your own stress triggers and cut them at the chase.

Walk on the beach.

Bask in the sunshine.

Hug a tree.

Walk barefoot.

“The coast is a fantastic place to live. The beach is just a two-minute walk from home. My husband and I have a little portable stereo you hook your phone up to and we take our little beach shelter and sit on the beach and listen to music near the pier.”

B – There Is Always Hope (Stories Are Strong)

Culture is now his saviour. Living on his Mother's Country, he has left the darkness of past traumas behind and is focussed on helping others to heal and just going with the flow. His Aboriginality grounds him to Mother Earth and a single creator. “Bunjil is my creator, to others it may be God.”

Anthony – Sharing The Healing (Stories Are Strong)

“GOING FOR A SURF IS MY RELEASE. EVEN IF IT'S BEEN A ROUGH DAY, I COME OUT JUST BUZZING. THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT IT, THE ENERGY OF THE OCEAN, I JUST CONNECT WITH IT.”

SOPHIE - STORIES ARE STRONG (CUSTODIAN FOR HER COMMUNITY)



Take care of yourself

Keep your eye on the prize of feeling good by ensuring you:

Get enough sleep

Eat well

Exercise

Have a routine

Swap your screen for a sunset, Netflix for a fishing net.

*Eat healthy foods. I'm still guilty – I love my Maccas!
But, they say what you eat is what you are and that's just an easy one to remember.*

Sam – Healing Through Culture (Stories Are Strong)

Mental health is “a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

(World Health Organisation)

Put simply – do what you love

Sport, music, art, craft, helping others. You know when something feels right for you and it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks – follow your bliss and find your purpose and strengths.

“Don't take life too seriously. You can only do what you can do. You can't push yourself too far, you can try, but it's not going to end well. Just accept it for what it is and just be happy.”

Tyson – Kicking Goals (Stories Are Strong)

#storiesstrong

WHO TO CONTACT

Lifeline 13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

www.beyondblue.org.au

Mensline 1300 789 978

Kidshelp 1300 551 800

Qlife 1800 184 527

(LGBTIQ peer support)

Yarning SafeNStrong 1800 95 95 63

(7 days 12 pm – 10 pm)

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

Emergency If life is in danger 000

LEGAL DISCLAIMER: Please note that the information provided in this article is for general information only. It is NOT intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice from qualified practitioners. If you have concerns regarding your mental health please seek professional advice.

This article is part of the #storiesstrong suicide prevention campaign which highlights a series of twenty articles developed by a diverse range of people with lived experience of suicide and experts in the field.

Stories Are Strong is an initiative of the **Place-Based Suicide Prevention Trials** project which is jointly funded by the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services and Gippsland PHN.

For more information visit www.gphn.org.au

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Gippsland PHN acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the traditional owners of country throughout Victoria and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures and their elders past and present. We also recognise, respect and affirm the central role played in our work by people with lived experience, their families and/or carers. Gippsland PHN is committed to providing inclusive services and work environments where people of all backgrounds, sexualities, genders, cultures, spiritual beliefs, age, bodies and abilities are valued, supported and celebrated.

