



Kinship  
Carers'

# Wellbeing

June 2018

MAGAZINE



## Inside this edition

The secret to health and happiness

Seven scientifically proven benefits of gratitude

Walking has more benefits than you think

Ten wellbeing uses for eucalyptus

The importance of sleep

Ten tips to reduce stress

Eating for stress relief

and more ...



Kinship Carers Victoria  
is supported by the Victorian Government.

# Inside this magazine

This magazine is designed to help kinship carers focus on their own wellbeing. Inside you will find tips on healthy eating, pampering yourself, relaxation and reducing stress. There are also activities to help you remember the information in the articles, and a few extra puzzles to stretch your mind and help keep it active.



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# The Secret to Health and Happiness

A Harvard study has proved that embracing community helps us live longer, and be happier

In 1938 scientists at Harvard University commenced tracking 268 second-year male<sup>1</sup> students in a longitudinal study designed to reveal the secrets to health and happiness. The study continues to this day – 80 years later. Researchers have studied the participants' health and broader lives, including their triumphs and failures in careers and marriage.

Nineteen of the original respondents are still alive, all in their mid-90s. The original recruits included President John F Kennedy and longtime *Washington Post* editor Ben



Bradlee. Although some participants went on to become successful businessmen, doctors, lawyers, and others ended up as schizophrenics or alcoholics, their pathways were not predictable.

The research now includes the men's children<sup>2</sup> to find out how early-life experiences affect health over time.

The most significant finding is that happiness in our relationships is a powerful influence on our health. Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy, protect them from life's stresses and help to delay mental and physical decline. Healthy relationships are better predictors of long and happy lives than social class, IQ, or even genes.

**Analysis of data found that:**

- **people's satisfaction with their relationships at age 50 was a better predictor of physical health in later life than their cholesterol levels were.**
- **marital satisfaction has a protective effect on people's mental health. Part of the study found that people who had happy marriages in their 80s reported that their moods didn't suffer, even on the days when they had more physical pain. Those who had unhappy marriages felt both more emotional and physical pain.**
- **those who lived longer and enjoyed sound health avoided smoking and alcohol in excess.**
- **those with strong social support experienced less mental deterioration as they aged.**

*'Loneliness kills. It's as powerful as smoking or alcoholism. Good relationships don't just protect our bodies; they protect our brains,' said Robert Waldinger in his TED talk. 'And those good relationships, they don't have to be smooth all the time. Some of our octogenarian couples could bicker with each other day in and day out, but as long as they felt that they could really count on the other when the going got tough, those arguments didn't take a toll on their memories.'*

*'Since aging starts at birth, people should start taking care of themselves at every stage of life, the researchers say. Aging is a continuous process,' Waldinger said. 'You can see how people can start to differ in their health trajectory in their 30s, so that by taking good care of yourself early in life you can set yourself on a better course for aging. The best advice I can give is "Take care of your body as though you were going to need it for 100 years," because you might.'*

*'It's easy to get isolated, to get caught up in work and not remembering, "Oh, I haven't seen these friends in a long time, so I try to pay more attention to my relationships than I used to."' — Robert Waldinger<sup>3</sup>*

In a book called *Aging Well*, George Vaillant wrote that six factors predicted healthy aging for the Harvard men: physical activity, absence of alcohol abuse and smoking, having mature mechanisms to cope with life's ups and downs, and enjoying both a healthy weight and a stable marriage. For the inner-city men<sup>4</sup>, education was an additional factor. 'The more education the inner-city men obtained,' wrote Vaillant, 'the more likely they were to stop smoking, eat sensibly, and use alcohol in moderation.' The more factors the subjects in Vaillant's study had in place, the better the odds they had for longer, happier lives.

The study showed that the role of genetics and long-lived ancestors proved less important to longevity than the level of satisfaction with relationships in midlife, now recognised as a good predictor of healthy aging. The research also debunked the idea that people's personalities 'set like plaster' by age 30 and cannot be changed.

'When the study began, nobody cared about empathy or attachment,' said Vaillant. 'But the key to healthy aging is relationships, relationships, relationships.'

'Those who were clearly train wrecks when they were in their 20s or 25s turned out to be wonderful octogenarians,' he said. 'On the other hand, alcoholism and major depression could take people who started life as stars and leave them at the end of their lives as train wrecks.'

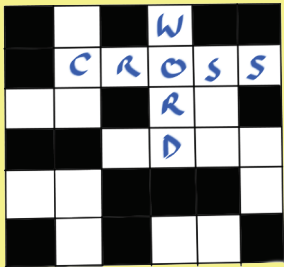
<sup>1</sup> Women weren't in the original study because the College was still all male

<sup>2</sup> 1300 who are in their 50s and 60s

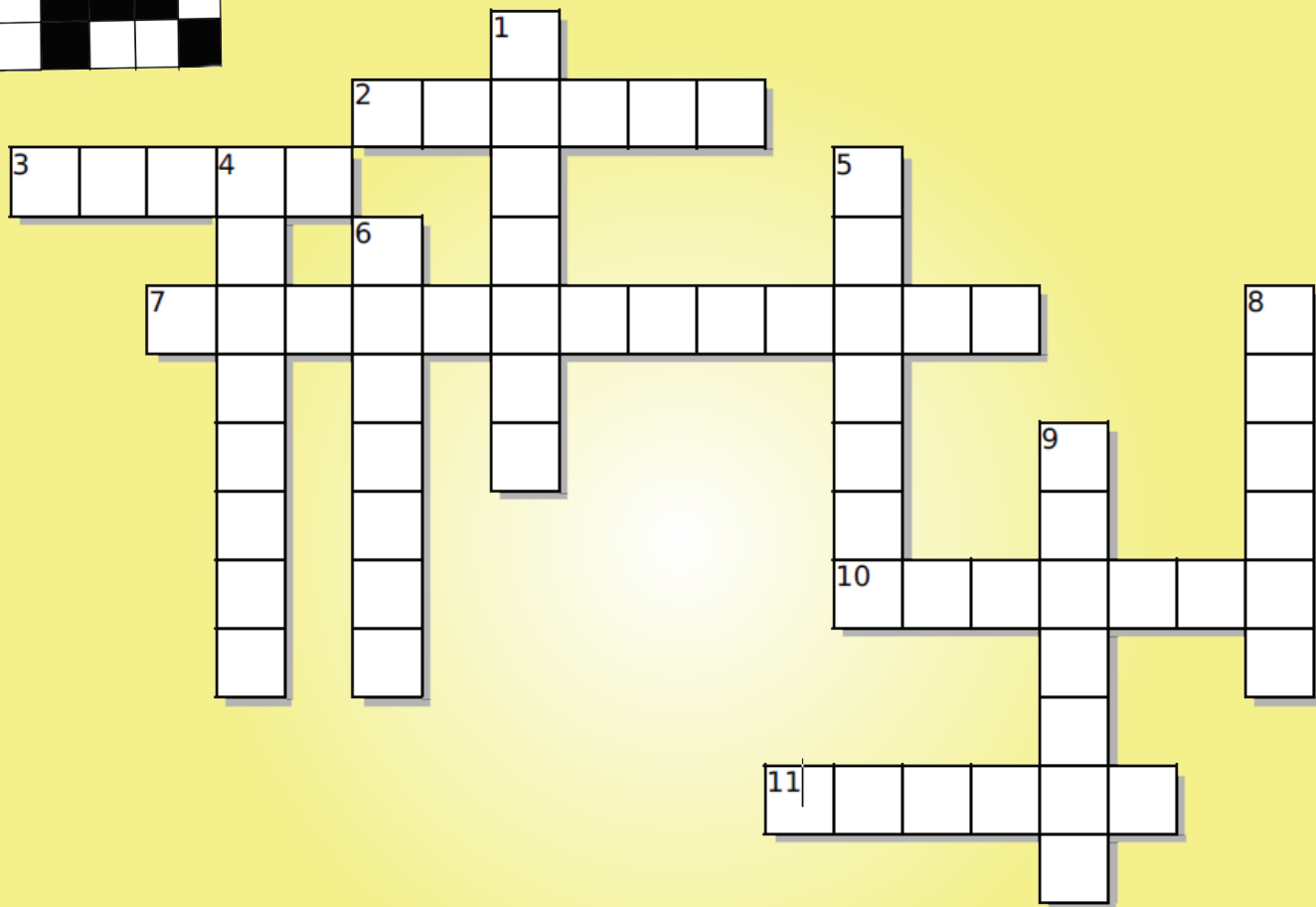
<sup>3</sup> Professor Robert Waldinger is director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development

<sup>4</sup> A control group study of 456 Boston inner-city residents set up parallel to the main study

**'Close relationships, more than money or fame, are what keep people happy, protect them from life's stresses and help to delay mental and physical decline.'**



If you're feeling stuck, most of the answers to this puzzle can be found in the article 'The Secret to Health and Happiness' on pages 4 & 5.



#### ACROSS CLUES

- 2. The people you are related to
- 3. This doesn't buy happiness
- 7. The study found that this is the most important factor in long-term happiness
- 10. Social ... can prevent mental deterioration
- 11. Keeping this at a healthy level is a factor in health and happiness

#### DOWN CLUES

- 1. Something to avoid if you want to live longer
- 4. Physical activity is an essential factor in good health and happiness
- 5. A few good ones can help keep you connected
- 6. American university that conducted a study into happiness
- 8. Taking care of this is an important factor in wellbeing
- 9. Sharing the feelings of others



*'We know that children who remain with kin are less likely to experience the trauma of separation and far more likely to remain connected to their families, friends and cultures. They are more likely to enjoy protective factors associated with a strong sense of identity and place, which, in turn, promotes their resilience. Managed and supported well, kinship care is best placed to support the rights and wellbeing of children requiring care.'*

**Liana Buchanan, Victorian Commissioner for Children and Young People**



# Seven Scientifically Proven Benefits of Gratitude

By Amy Morin, a psychotherapist and the author of *13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do*, a bestselling book that is being translated into more than 20 languages.

‘Stop feeling sorry for yourself,’ we are often told. And while it can be hard to avoid self-pity entirely, mentally strong people choose to exchange self-pity for gratitude. Whether you choose to write a few sentences in a gratitude journal, or simply take a moment to silently acknowledge all that you have, giving thanks can transform your life.

Here are seven scientifically proven benefits of gratitude:

## 1. Gratitude opens the door to more relationships

Not only does saying ‘thank you’ constitute good manners, but showing appreciation can help you win new friends, according to a 2014 study published in *Emotion*. The study found that thanking a new acquaintance makes them more likely to seek an ongoing relationship. So whether you thank a stranger for holding the door or send a thank-you note to that colleague who helped you with a project, acknowledging other people’s contributions can lead to new opportunities.

## 2. Gratitude improves physical health

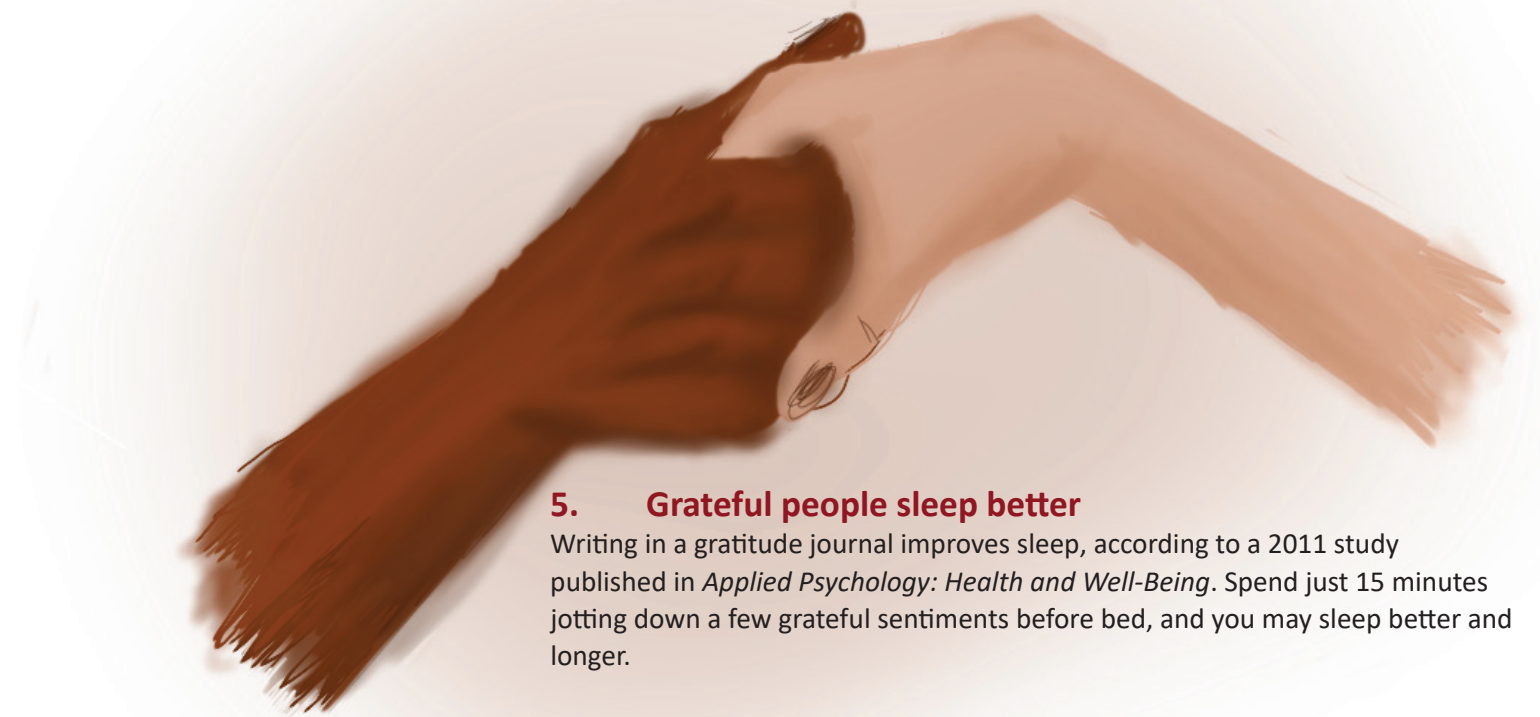
Grateful people experience fewer aches and pains and report feeling healthier than other people, according to a 2012 study published in *Personality and Individual Differences*. Not surprisingly, grateful people are also more likely to take care of their health. They exercise more often and are more likely to attend regular check-ups, which is likely to contribute to further longevity.

## 3. Gratitude improves psychological health

Gratitude reduces a multitude of toxic emotions, from envy and resentment to frustration and regret. Robert Emmons, a leading gratitude researcher, has conducted multiple studies on the link between gratitude and wellbeing. His research confirms that gratitude effectively increases happiness and reduces depression.

## 4. Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces aggression

Grateful people are more likely to behave in a prosocial manner, even when others behave less kindly, according to a 2012 study by the University of Kentucky. Study participants who ranked higher on gratitude scales were less likely to retaliate against others, even when given negative feedback. They experienced more sensitivity and empathy toward other people and a decreased desire to seek revenge.



## 5. Grateful people sleep better

Writing in a gratitude journal improves sleep, according to a 2011 study published in *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*. Spend just 15 minutes jotting down a few grateful sentiments before bed, and you may sleep better and longer.

## 6. Gratitude improves self-esteem

A 2014 study published in the *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology* found that gratitude increased athletes’ self-esteem, an essential component to optimal performance. Other studies have shown that gratitude reduces social comparisons. Rather than becoming resentful toward people who have more money or better jobs – a major factor in reduced self-esteem – grateful people are able to appreciate other people’s accomplishments.

## 7. Gratitude increases mental strength

For years, research has shown gratitude not only reduces stress, but it may also play a major role in overcoming trauma. A 2006 study published in *Behavior Research and Therapy* found that Vietnam War veterans with higher levels of gratitude experienced lower rates of post-traumatic stress disorder. A 2003 study published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* found that gratitude was a major contributor to resilience following the terrorist attacks on September 11. Recognising all that you have to be thankful for – even during the worst times – fosters resilience.

Source: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/what-mentally-strong-people-dont-do/201504/7-scientifically-proven-benefits-gratitude>



# A GRATITUDE JOURNAL

List five things for which you are grateful.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

KCV has 100 free grateful journals available – contact (03) 9372 2422 to request a copy.

## The Importance of Sleep

Good quality sleep is an important part of wellbeing. Studies are beginning to show that getting a good night's sleep can be just as important to your overall health as eating well and exercising regularly.

**WHILE YOU SLEEP** your body is performing essential functions such as:

- healing damaged cells and promoting recovery from the rigours of the previous day
- boosting your immune system
- recharging your heart and cardiovascular system for the next day
- converting your short-term memories into long-term memory.

While we sleep, our bodies cycle through two phases: rapid eye movement (REM) and non-rapid eye movement (NREM). Both phases are important for different reasons, because they have different functions. For example, it is thought that during REM sleep we process memories, and that during the final stage of NREM sleep the most relaxation and cell repair occurs. The REM and NREM cycles can be interrupted multiple times throughout the night by a variety of factors, including breathing difficulties (such as sleep apnea), snoring, or getting up to go to the toilet. When this happens, we may miss out on vital body processes, affecting our health and wellbeing not only the next day, but on a long-term basis as well.

**IF YOU DON'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP** you might find that you:

- can feel drowsy, and moody or irritable
- having difficulty absorbing new information, remembering things or making decisions
- are craving more unhealthy foods, which could lead to unhealthy weight gain.

If this happens often over long periods of time, it places strain on your nervous system, body and overall health.

Sometimes sleep problems may have a medical cause. If you've tried improving your sleep, but still wake up feeling unrefreshed, there might be more to the story, and it's important to talk to your doctor.

Sleep medications are not usually required to help with sleep problems. While they can help in the short term, they also have several side effects and may not give superior quality sleep. Your body can also get used to these medications quickly, so the effect wears off.

# THREE BENEFITS OF A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP

## 1. Improved energy

Studies conducted on college athletes have found that sleeping for 8 to 10 hours a day improves their athletic performance, including increased speed and stamina.

## 2. Improved concentration

Having a good night's sleep can assist with learning and memory, clarity when making decisions and, most importantly, can help prevent accidents when performing potentially dangerous tasks such as driving.

## 3. Better weight control

Lack of quality sleep affects some of the hormones governing hunger. When you are feeling tired, the body tries to compensate by craving high-energy foods. Giving in to these cravings can lead to overeating and weight gain. Further, a study from the University of Chicago has found that although two groups of people on a diet might lose similar amounts of weight, those who experienced more restful sleep were more likely to burn fat, while those who were less well rested were more likely to lose muscle mass instead.



Sources:

<https://headspace.org.au/young-people/sleep-fact-sheet/>

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<http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20459221,00.html>

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# Ten Tips for Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Good quality sleep is an important part of wellbeing



1. Maintain a regular sleeping pattern. Aim to go to bed and wake up around the same time each day, including on the weekends.
2. Don't take naps during the day as this affects your body's routine and may reduce your ability to sleep at night.
3. Make your sleeping environment as comfortable as possible. Your bedroom should be dark, cool (around 16-18°C) and quiet. If you don't have a comfortable bed or pillow, consider changing them.
4. Use your bed only for sleep (and sex). Avoid doing activities like watching television, studying, eating or working in bed, so that your brain will not associate your bed with being awake and active.
5. Turn off screens such as your TV, phone and laptop at least 30 minutes before bedtime. The light from these screens can prevent your brain from producing the chemicals it needs to help you get to sleep.

6. Avoid distracting noises and lights or engaging in mentally stimulating activity before bed. These may include watching exciting TV programs, playing computer games, paying bills or holding important discussions. You should feel relaxed and warm before bed. Reading a book or taking a warm bath may help you unwind and de-stress before bedtime.

7. Exercise during the day – it can help you to feel tired at night. This might mean going to the gym, playing a sport, or just walking around the block. Try to avoid exercising just before bedtime though, as this can keep you awake.

8. Avoid taking stimulants before bed, including caffeine, nicotine or other substances. Avoid drinking alcohol before bed. Alcohol may worsen snoring or sleep apnea, cause fragmented sleep or wake you up too early. You may also need to get up to use the toilet more often through the night.

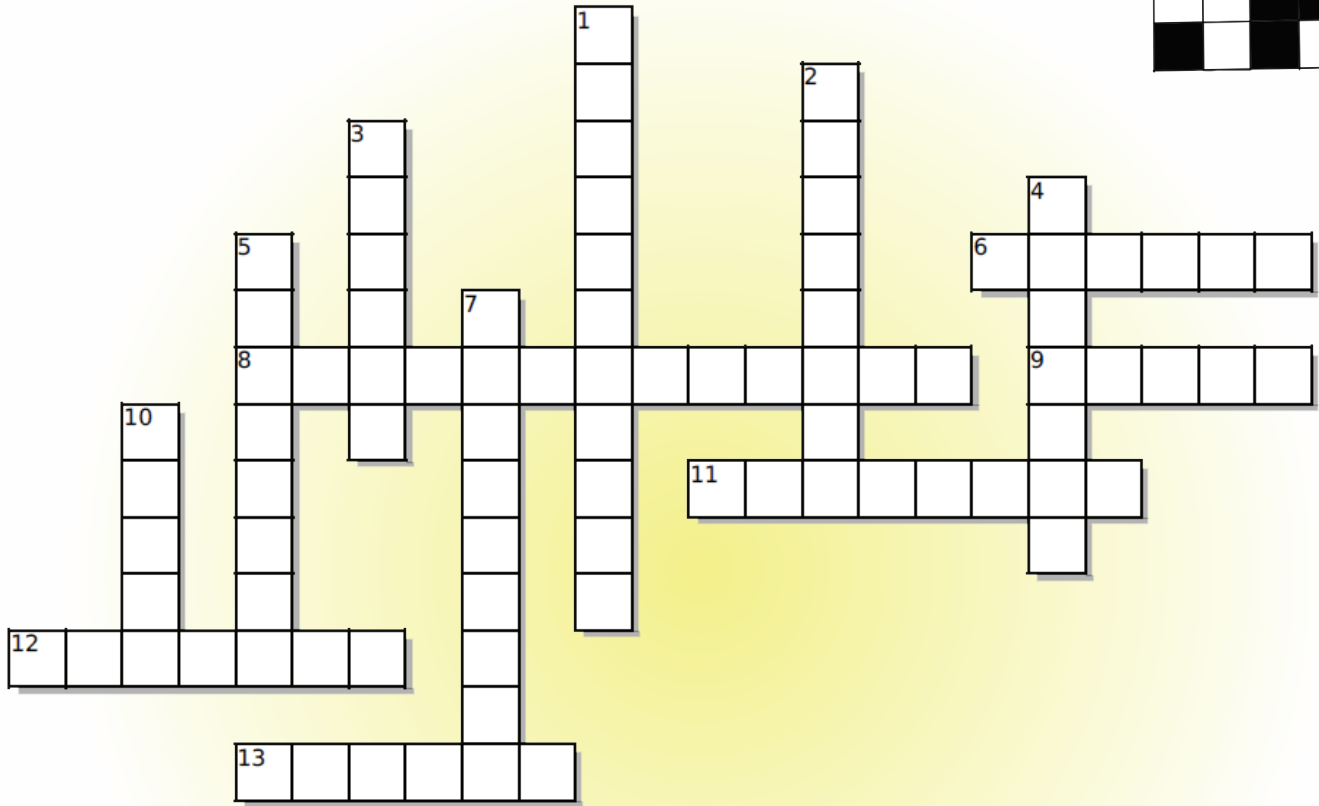
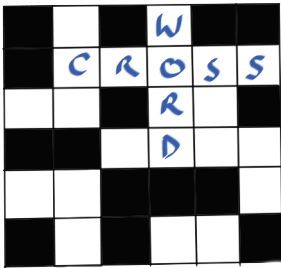
9. Do not eat too much or too little before bed as this can affect your sleep. Don't eat a heavy, spicy or sugary meal just before bedtime. If you're hungry, a light snack might help you sleep.

10. Natural sleep cycles are based on your body clock, which is mainly set by when you're exposed to light. In the evening, your body needs little light stimulation, so try dimming the lights. Spend some time in natural light. This helps promote melatonin production in your body. Melatonin is a hormone that allows you to know when to sleep and when to wake up.

*Hints from yesteryear*  
*Another tip for sleeplessness:*  
*the person who sleeps with*  
*a low pillow under the head*  
*and a plump one under the*  
*feet will rest far better than*  
*under usual conditions.*  
*Mary Murray – My Mother's*  
*Times*



If you're feeling stuck, most of the answers to this puzzle can be found in the articles 'The importance of sleep' and 'Ten tips for getting a good night's sleep' on the previous pages.



## ACROSS CLUES

6. Your brain processes this in your sleep
8. Getting enough sleep improves your mental focus and ...
9. Can affect your body clock and make it harder to sleep
11. Save your bed mostly for this activity
12. Developing a regular sleeping ... can help you sleep better
13. Driving can be dangerous if you are ...

## DOWN CLUES

1. You'll need your bed to be ... if you're going to sleep well
2. This stimulant, found in coffee, can keep you awake
3. Reading a book or taking a warm bath may help you do this before bed
4. Sleep is a time for ... damaged cells
5. You have to do this for your body, just like you do for your phone
7. It can be hard to make ... when you are too tired
10. Sleeping is easier when your bedroom is ...



# EATING FOR STRESS RELIEF

You might be tempted to reach for a block of chocolate or a tub of ice-cream when you're feeling stressed, but perhaps you should try a healthy alternative instead. Studies have shown that the following nutrients can be linked to the stress reactions in the body, and eating or avoiding certain foods can help to moderate those reactions.

**POTASSIUM** – When you are stressed, your adrenaline levels spike, and your potassium levels drop. Studies have linked low potassium levels with depression. Boost your potassium levels by eating:

- potato and sweet potato
- watermelon
- spinach
- beetroot
- bananas



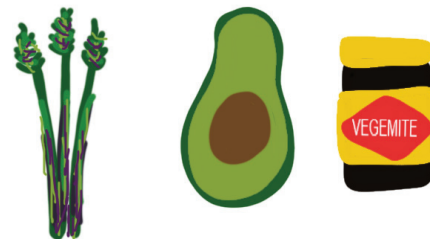
**TRYPTOPHAN** – That sleepy feeling you get after eating Christmas lunch is probably not just from over-indulging. It might be linked to the tryptophan found in the roast turkey. Tryptophan is an amino acid that is converted in the body to serotonin, which regulates mood, appetite, and sleep. Sources of tryptophan include:

- porridge
- dates
- eggs
- fish
- poultry
- tofu
- nuts
- dark chocolate



**B-GROUP VITAMINS** – B-group vitamins include Thiamine, Niacin, Pyridoxine, Folic Acid, and Cyanocobalamin. Among them these nutrients support the production of mood regulators serotonin and melatonin, help control blood sugar, produce energy, and support the digestive system. A study by Swinburne University in Melbourne found that participants taking a Vitamin B-Complex supplement reported a 20% reduction in work-related stress. Rich sources of B-group Vitamins include:

- beef
- spinach
- asparagus
- avocado
- dried beans, peas and lentils
- nuts
- vegemite



**OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS** – Omega-3 can help regulate the body's levels of cortisol, a hormone that is released during times of stress. While a little cortisol is good for you, having higher levels for extended periods of time can lead to complications such as obesity, diabetes, osteoporosis, fatigue, and compromise to the immune system. The best source of omega-3 are:

- oily fish, such as salmon, sardines or mackerel
- krill oil
- flax seeds
- nuts
- grass-fed beef



**VITAMIN C** – Another nutrient known to help regulate cortisol levels is Vitamin C. Sources include:

- citrus fruits
- blueberries
- cranberries
- kiwifruit
- pineapple

**MAGNESIUM** – Magnesium aids muscle relaxation and regulates the nervous system. Lack of magnesium can amplify the stress response. Boost magnesium levels by eating:

- green leafy vegetables
- whole grains
- beans
- nuts
- dried seeds such as sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds (pepitas)

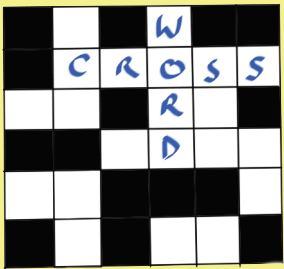


**PROBIOTICS** – As well as helping to regulate cortisol, probiotics stimulate healthy gut bacteria. Studies are beginning to show that there may be a link between changes to gut bacteria and anxiety levels. Low-fat yoghurt is the best source of probiotics, but they can also be found in fermented foods and drinks such as kefir, and sauerkraut

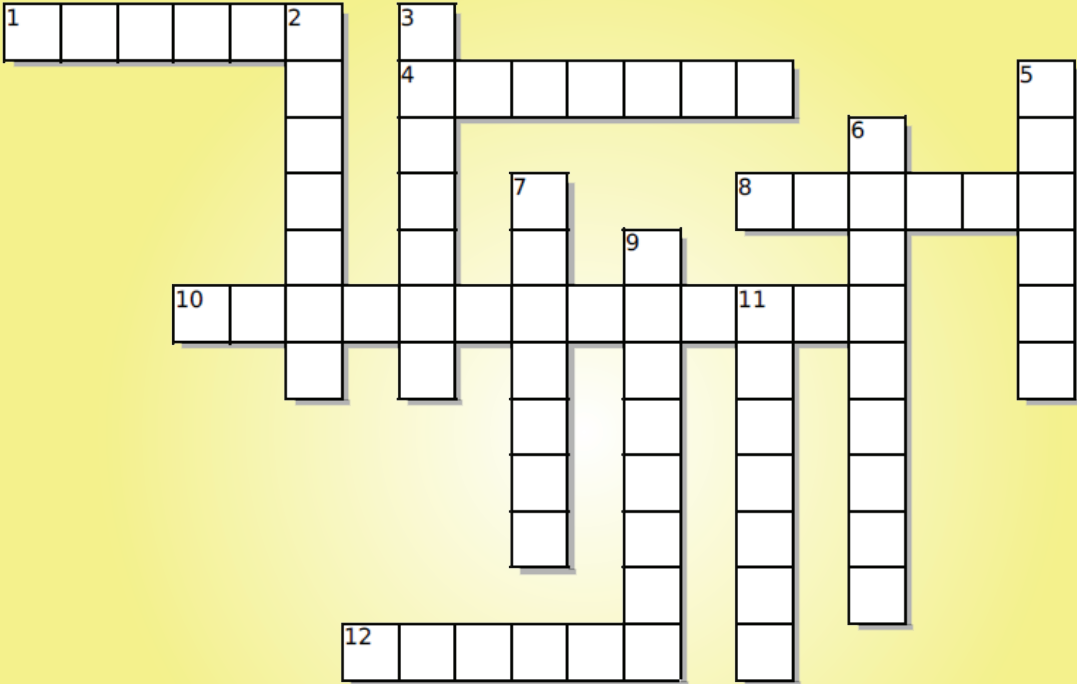


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<http://www.health.com/food/12-superfoods-for-stress-relief>  
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<http://goodrelaxation.com/2014/01/omega-3-relieving-stress/>  
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If you're feeling stuck, all the answers to this puzzle can be found in the article 'Eating for stress relief' on the previous two pages.

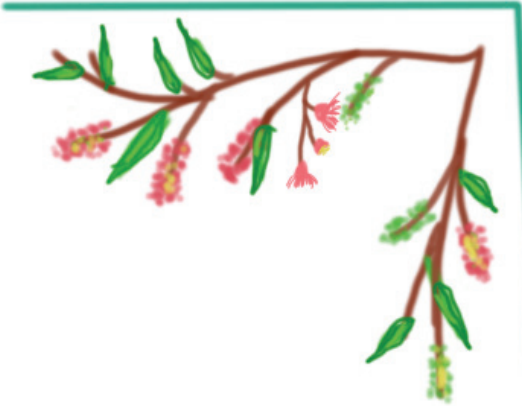


ACROSS CLUES

- 1. You might start feeling sleepy if you eat a lot of this bird at Christmas
- 4. Also called 'pepitas', the seeds of this orange fruit are high in magnesium
- 8. Oily fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids, Atlantic ...
- 10. A little indulgence that can lower stress hormones like cortisol
- 12. Citrus fruit named for its bright colour

DOWN CLUES

- 2. This dairy food is high in probiotics, and usually low in fat
- 3. One of a number of green leafy vegetables high in magnesium
- 5. This yellow fruit is high in potassium
- 6. Tiny round fruit that is high in Vitamin C and antioxidants
- 7. Main ingredient in guacamole, rich in B vitamins
- 9. Comforting breakfast food that stimulates serotonin
- 11. Oval nut high in potassium, and delicious covered in dark chocolate



*'There is no doubt that it is grandparent and other kin carers that are helping to ensure that the rights of our most vulnerable children are protected and upheld. They are making sure they get a good education, understand their identity, be healthy, are free from violence and abuse, are listened to and valued. I congratulate you for the work you do and the love and support you give to children.'*

**Megan Mitchell, National Children's Commissioner – Australian Human Rights Commission**





# Ten Wellbeing Uses of Eucalyptus Oil

**Note:** Always test a small area of your skin first to make sure you are not going to have an allergic reaction to eucalyptus oil. If you have sensitive skin, eucalyptus oil can be diluted with a small amount of vegetable oil or baby oil. Eucalyptus oil can be toxic if ingested in large enough quantities, so it is not recommended for young children to use eucalyptus toothpaste. Do not use eucalyptus oil treatments on children under six years of age.

1. **TO CLEAR NASAL CONGESTION IF YOU HAVE A COLD OR SINUS TROUBLE.** Add a few drops of eucalyptus oil to a bowl of hot water and inhale the steam. At night sprinkle a few drops of eucalyptus oil on your pillow, or on a handkerchief.
2. **AS AN ANTISEPTIC FOR CUTS, ACNE OR INSECT BITES.** Dab the affected area with a cotton ball soaked in eucalyptus oil. Alternately, you can bathe the site in a solution of warm water with a capful of eucalyptus oil mixed in.
3. **TO SOOTHE ACHES AND PAINS IN MUSCLES AND JOINTS.** Massage a small amount of eucalyptus oil into the affected area until you feel 'a warm glow'.
4. **AS A REVITALISING AGENT.** Spray a small amount onto the base of your shower before you turn on the water. The effect of the eucalyptus scent diffused with the steam from the hot water should leave you feeling refreshed.

5. **TO EASE TIRED, ACHING FEET.** Bathe them in a bowl of warm water with a capful of eucalyptus oil. For an added massage effect, place several golf balls in the water, then roll your feet around on them for several minutes.

6. **AS A NATURAL INSECT REPELLENT.** Combine 50 ml canola oil with 2 ml eucalyptus oil and 2 ml of citronella (optional). Mix well, then apply to exposed areas of skin. Re-apply every 2-3 hours.

7. **TO CARE FOR THE HAIR AND SCALP.** For shiny hair, mix 50 ml olive oil with 5 ml of eucalyptus oil. Apply to the hair, then wrap in a clean towel for 15 to 20 minutes before washing as normal with shampoo and conditioner. For an itchy scalp, rinse the hair thoroughly in a mixture of 50 ml white vinegar, 5 ml eucalyptus oil and 1 litre of warm water. Immediately wash with shampoo and conditioner.

8. **AS A NATURAL TOOTHPASTE.** Combine 6 tbsp coconut oil, 6 tbsp pure bicarbonate of soda, 25 drops eucalyptus oil, and 1 tsp stevia powder. Pour into a resealable glass jar and store in a darkened cupboard between uses.

9. **AS A MOISTURISER.** Mix 3-5 drops of eucalyptus oil with 1 tablespoon jojoba oil, olive oil or sweet almond oil and massage into the skin.

10. **FOR STRESS RELIEF.** Combine a few drops of eucalyptus oil and peppermint oil in an oil burner to diffuse a relaxing aroma throughout your house. Alternately rub a few drops directly onto your wrists, under the feet and into your temples.

Sources:

Peter and Tegan Abbot – Australia's Natural Wonder: Eucalyptus Oil

<http://www.naturallivingideas.com/benefits-uses-of-eucalyptus-oil/>

<https://www.simplegreensmoothies.com/recipes/green-healing/homemade-toothpaste-with-coconut-oil>

<https://www.up-nature.com/blogs/news/top-20-incredible-benefits-of-eucalyptus-essential-oil>



# TEN TIPS TO RELIEVE STRESS

By Megan Crowle

## 1. Identify at least one good thing that happened each day

– write it down in a diary, or on scraps of coloured paper that you can keep together in a box or jar. Focusing attention on gratitude brings about an almost immediate energy shift, and whatever seemed so awful tends to become less daunting. Do this every day, and over time you will have a collection of good memories to look back on.

**2. Buy yourself a plant** – studies have shown that having a little greenery in your space can help lower blood pressure. If your thumbs aren't that green, succulents can be inexpensive, fairly low maintenance, and thrive indoors.

**3. Put on some music** – any music you like will work. Try singing or humming if you don't have access to an electronic device.



**4. Craft** – taking a few minutes out of your busy day to unleash your creativity can be a great way to unwind. Expressing your feelings by drawing or painting can be therapeutic, or crafts which involve repetitive motions such as knitting or crochet can allow you an opportunity to mentally switch off for a while, while still making something of practical use.

**5. Take some time to laugh** – studies have shown that laughter can not only relieve tension but improves immune function as well. Laughter first activates your stress response and then deactivates it, creating a kind of 'rollercoaster' that leads to a feeling of relaxation. Try watching a viral video, swapping jokes with your friends or seeing a funny movie.

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**6. Try some gentle exercise** – moving your body, even for a few minutes a day, can help to release tension stored in your muscles. Take the family for a walk or a swim (or snatch some time to go by yourself if you can!) If you're short of time, or can't leave the kids unsupervised, try a five-minute walk around the back garden or some light stretching.

**7. Progressive muscle relaxation** – start with your toes and work your way up: tighten your foot muscles as much as you can, then relax them. Make your way up your body, tightening and relaxing each muscle until you've finished with your face. It might seem like a silly idea at first, but I can vouch for this one from personal experience.

**8. Focus on your senses a few minutes a day** – practice being mindful, focusing only on what's going on in the present. Pay attention to your senses: what you see, feel, hear, and smell. This can make a huge difference in your emotional and physical wellbeing when done daily.

**9. Plan ahead** – if the morning rush is getting you down, try doing as much preparation as you can the night before. School clothes can be laid out, bags packed with everything needed for the next day's classes, lunches made and left ready in the fridge. Even breakfasts can be made in advance – try a recipe for overnight oats or a healthy frittata. If the children can help out with some of these tasks, that's even better!

**10. Get a good night's sleep** – turn off your electronic devices at least an hour before you plan to go to bed, wind down by reading a good book, or try muscle relaxation (tip 7) while lying in bed to help you drift off. Don't forget to set an alarm clock – there's nothing more stressful than being behind schedule before you've even started the day!

Sources:

<https://www.shape.com/lifestyle/mind-and-body/20-simple-stress-relief-techniques>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/stress-relief-that-works\\_n\\_3842511](http://www.huffingtonpost.com.au/entry/stress-relief-that-works_n_3842511)





# MY WELLBEING JOURNAL

List the wellbeing activities in which you engage over a one-month period. Try to plan ahead and list activities for the whole month and then make them happen.

| Activity | Date | Star Rating according to how you enjoyed it |
|----------|------|---|
| 1.       |      | ★★★★★                                       |
| 2.       |      |   |
| 3.       |      |   |
| 4.       |      |   |
| 5.       |      |   |
| 6.       |      |   |
| 7.       |      |   |
| 8.       |      |   |
| 9.       |      |   |
| 10.      |      |   |

# Walking has more benefits than you think

Walking is a great, inexpensive and low-impact way to burn calories. But walking has health benefits beyond improving your physical fitness.

It can also help to lower your stress levels and improve your sense of wellbeing. A 2017 study published in the journal *General Hospital Psychiatry* found that 80% of those receiving treatment for depression believed exercise improved their mood.

All you need is a pair of comfortable shoes and a footpath.

Many people find it difficult to find the motivation to exercise. If you are having this trouble, try teaming up with a friend – if you set a time and a place where you are going to meet up for a walk, you’ll both be less likely to back out and let each other down.



## FIVE BENEFITS OF WALKING

- 1. It helps shift your mind into a more peaceful state, by triggering a state called ‘involuntary attention’.
- 2. It brings you back to nature, which can improve memory and attention span, while reducing stress.
- 3. Walking boosts endorphins, which reduce stress hormones.
- 4. Walking boosts energy – reducing fatigue can also reduce stress levels.
- 5. Walking can be a pleasurable way of spending time with friends and strengthening bonds. Social interaction has also been linked to decreasing the levels of stress hormones in the body.

Sources:  
<http://blog.myfitnesspal.com/daily-walk-ease-depression/>  
[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/03/national-walking-day-stress-relief-tips\\_n\\_2992972.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/03/national-walking-day-stress-relief-tips_n_2992972.html)

# Take a Deep Breath

Did you know that practising deep breathing is an effective way to regulate your body's reaction to stress? Deliberately taking slow, deep breaths into your diaphragm can encourage the body to relax.

Shallow breathing in the upper chest can be a sign of stress or anxiety and can disrupt the balance of the gases oxygen and carbon dioxide in the body. This may contribute to making your feelings of anxiety worse. When you breathe deeply, it sends a message to your brain to calm down, which will then slow your heart rate and decrease your blood pressure.

Learning to breathe deeply may seem strange at first, but if practised regularly it can improve not only your stress levels, but also your overall health. Over time, strengthening the muscles in your abdomen will help make breathing deeply happen more naturally.

## AN EXERCISE TO PRACTISE DEEP BREATHING

1. Lie down flat on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor. Place one hand on your chest and one on your tummy. (You can lie on the floor or on your bed – whatever is most comfortable for you.)
2. Use the muscles in your tummy to draw in a deep breath while counting to three in your head, so that the hand on your tummy rises and falls, while your chest stays relaxed. Then breathe out slowly through your nose, again counting to three.
3. While you are doing this, try to release any tension in your body.

Do this as often as you need, perhaps for several minutes each night before going to sleep. If you are feeling stressed throughout the day, stop what you are doing and focus on taking slow, deep breaths.

Sources:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/breathing-to-reduce-stress>

<http://www.anxietyaustralia.com.au/treatment-options/slow-breathing-to-decrease-anxiety-and-panic/>

<https://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/stress-management-breathing-exercises-for-relaxation>

“Grandma, you make me want to touch the sky: Help for grandparents raising grandchildren”, by Paul Harnett, Sally Frye and Andrew Wood, University of Queensland and Griffith University, 2008.

# STOP – LOCK – AFFIRM

The process of ‘**STOP – LOCK – AFFIRM**’ is one in which you bring yourself back into PRESENT TIME. It is especially helpful when you are feeling overwhelmed and perhaps a tad out of control.

The three steps are simple to implement anywhere and anytime. It's a fun exercise and if practised often, can create a habit that has the power to centre you and help fill you with happiness.



**Catch yourself mid-thought and observe the thought/the feelings you are having.**



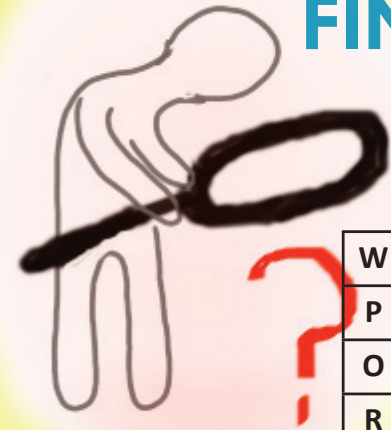
**Look around, lock yourself into your surroundings. Name the things you see.**  
For example: sky, plane, clouds, cars, trees, road, street signs, dog, people.  
**This can be done inside or outside.**  
**This simple step will pull you into the moment where you can then ...**



**Repeat some simple affirmations that you have put together, one-liners that are easy to remember and have meaning to you. Things like:**

- I can do whatever I put my mind to
- I don't sweat the small stuff
- I am in charge of how I feel and today I am choosing happiness
- I am my own superhero
- I have the power to create change
- I let go of all that no longer serves me
- I deserve the best and I accept the best now
- I am powerful

# FIND THE HEALTHY FOODS



|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | X | I | C | L | E | A | N | M | E | A | T | V | E |
| P | A | T | A | I | K | L | O | P | R | T | O | I | L |
| O | J | L | B | O | A | T | S | C | H | O | M | E | Z |
| R | U | I | N | T | G | S | E | L | P | P | A | G | P |
| A | Q | A | W | U | H | O | L | A | N | U | T | G | E |
| N | U | T | A | N | T | I | O | N | R | L | O | P | P |
| G | I | A | N | O | S | S | C | H | O | O | P | L | I |
| E | N | A | O | C | A | R | T | O | P | E | R | A | T |
| S | A | L | M | O | N | O | U | N | J | E | Q | N | A |
| E | L | M | S | C | A | S | H | E | W | N | U | T | S |
| E | T | O | I | D | N | A | P | Y | U | C | I | G | L |
| H | I | N | D | R | A | Y | O | Q | P | L | N | A | O |
| C | A | D | U | M | B | T | R | U | H | G | O | Y | V |
| A | W | S | E | I | R | R | E | B | X | K | A | L | E |

Almonds  
Apples  
Bananas  
Berries  
Cashew nuts  
Cheese  
Coconut oil  
Eggplant  
Honey  
Kale

Lean meat  
Oats  
Oranges  
Pepitas  
Quinoa  
Salmon  
Tomato  
Tuna  
Walnuts  
Yoghurt

# GPV/KCV Artist in Residence

GPV/KCV has its own artist in residence  
She conducts art activities with groups of kinship carers.  
Any group of 10 or more kinship carers can book a workshop.  
All materials are supplied.  
A small fee may be charged.

For further details contact GPV/KCV on  
(03) 9372 2422 or [director@grandparents.com.au](mailto:director@grandparents.com.au)



Diffusing Watercolour Masterpiece – an example of the kind of activity that will be offered. This and many more!

# Books for children in kinship care

GPV/KCV has a selection of books for children of all ages to give away.  
Please contact the GPV/KCV office if you would like a free book for the children in your care.





# A BRAINTEASER

Unscramble the four words below. When you have finished, you will find that the letters in the blue squares can also be unjumbled to make a familiar phrase.

CLKUY   

AFIMLY   

PPORSTU   

AEGHILN   

Example:

DEFINR   

JLLOY   

# WHEN IN NEED: CALL A FRIEND

| WHO DO I CONTACT ....   |  |
|---|--|
| ...to find out where the nearest support group operates?              | KINSHIP CARERS VICTORIA<br>(03) 93722422<br><a href="http://www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org">www.kinshipcarersvictoria.org</a>       |
| ...for five free parenting counselling sessions on the telephone?     | GATEWAY HEALTH<br>1800 880 660<br><a href="http://www.gatewayhealth.org.au">www.gatewayhealth.org.au</a>                           |
| ...to find out what training is available for kinship carers?         | CARER KAFÉ<br>(03) 9416 4292<br><a href="http://www.carerkafe.org.au">www.carerkafe.org.au</a>                                     |
| ...to find out what financial and child care assistance is available? | GRANDPARENT ADVISOR CENTRELINK<br>1800 245 965   |
| ...to find out about bereavement assistance?                          | BEREAVEMENT ASSISTANCE<br>(03) 9564 7778<br><a href="http://www.bereavementassistance.org.au">www.bereavementassistance.org.au</a> |
| ...to find out about help for problem gambling?                       | GAMBLING HELP LINE<br>1800 858 858<br><a href="http://www.gamblinghelpline.org.au">www.gamblinghelpline.org.au</a>                 |
| ...to find out about family mental health and wellbeing?              | DRUMMOND STREET<br>(03) 9663 6733<br><a href="http://www.ds.org.au">www.ds.org.au</a>  |
| ...to find after hours medical advice?                                | AFTER HOURS GP HELPLINE<br>1800 022 222<br>Nurse on call 1300 606 024  |







Kinship Carers Victoria  
is supported by the Victorian Government.