

Accidental counsellor

TIP SHEET

Relationships Australia WA has developed a range of tips to help support you during difficult times.

As a free resource, we encourage you to share this with your community.

Do you find people open-up to you and ask for advice when they are going through distressing situations?

Here are some suggestions to help you assist others who may need support:

1. Focus on helping rather than rescuing

Assist by encouraging them to explore options and make decisions themselves and avoid trying to 'fix' their problems for them. This allows the person to maintain confidence in their decision making and choose action they want to take.

2. Show empathy

Demonstrate compassion, maintain self-awareness, and show empathy by listening without judgment. Sit alongside them and ask about their situation, taking the time to understand and tuning in to their emotions.

3. Be present

Engage in active listening by:

Paraphrasing - repeating the content told to you in your own words.

Summarising - summing up the main points that have been shared with you.

Reflective listening –reflect the meaning of what the person has said, so they have an opportunity to confirm you have understood them correctly, or further explain the situation.

4. Use Questions

Encourage exploration of options and perspectives through thoughtful questioning. Guide them in generating possible solutions and creating a 'pros' and 'cons' list for each.

5. Recognise your limits

Acknowledge when your support has reached its limit. If they are still having difficulty, consider

referring them person to a professional counsellor. You can continue to offer them informal support while they receive support from a qualified practitioner.

6. Prioritise self-care

Maintaining your well-being ensures you can effectively help others. Activities such as yoga, meditation, walking and deep breathing will help keep you healthy and balanced, so you can be a reliable source of support for those in need.

If you would like to increase your emotional awareness and control, our [Accidental Counsellor](#) workshop you can book online or call 6164 0200.

Relationships Australia WA also offers a variety of relationship workshops, courses and support services to help you navigate life's challenges. For more information please call us on 1300 364 277.