

# HEADSUP ON DIABETES

## Peer support for diabetes

Connecting with other people who have diabetes is an effective means of accessing peer support. Sharing your experiences with others who face the daily challenges of managing diabetes can help you feel less alone. Read on to find out about peer support and how to access it in your area.



### What is peer support?

Peer support is when people living with a chronic condition (like diabetes) give and/or receive support from one another.

Many people who have diabetes have never talked to anyone else with diabetes, even though they may want to. This can feel very isolating.

People with diabetes may access peer support because:

- family and friends, despite their best efforts, can't fully understand what it's like to live with diabetes
- health professionals may not always have the time to talk about all aspects of living with diabetes.

### Peer support is a way for people with diabetes to share their:

- knowledge and skills
- insights and experiences
- thoughts and concerns
- feelings about living with diabetes.

“It's nice to be able to contact someone who's exactly the same as you. They give you that little bit of encouragement. You may be having a flat day and you just want to go, ‘Oh, I don't want to get up for work’, and that someone is saying, ‘No, you can do it’ ... I think it's great.”

James, 26, person with diabetes

### What to expect from peer support

Connecting with other people who have diabetes can help in many ways. You may:

- feel less alone (e.g., have someone to talk to or encourage you when diabetes gets you down)
- learn from others about self-management (e.g., how to put medical advice into practice, share helpful tips and boost your motivation levels)
- be able to share tips about access to health professionals and community resources (e.g., personal recommendations)
- improve your overall health and wellbeing.



### What not to expect from peer support

Peer support can lead to many positive experiences but it:

- does not replace the advice you get from your health professional (e.g., about treatments or lifestyle). Always talk to your health professional before making changes to the way you manage your diabetes
- may not be the right 'fit' for you, as it's not a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Some people prefer not to talk about their feelings, or would prefer to do so only with their health professional
- is unlikely to give you the answers to all of your problems. Peer support can be a great source of information and advice, but it won't necessarily 'solve' all your diabetes related concerns.

If you are unsure about joining a peer support group/community, share your thoughts and feelings with people you trust. Also consider talking about this with your diabetes health professional. They can help you work out what kind of support would be most helpful for you.

“Over the years I've met a few friends with diabetes. Every now and then we have a chat about how things are going. It's definitely helpful to have people who can relate to it.”

Lorna, 62, person with diabetes

## More information and support

### Diabetes Australia & NDSS

[diabetesaustralia.com.au](http://diabetesaustralia.com.au)

[ndss.com.au](http://ndss.com.au)

NDSS Helpline **1800 637 700**

Through the NDSS, you can access a free national NDSS Helpline to obtain information about diabetes and learn about education programs, peer support groups and other events.

Contact your state/territory diabetes organisation for more information about peer support near you:

### Diabetes NSW/ACT

☎ **1800 637 700** 🌐 [diabetesnsw.com.au](http://diabetesnsw.com.au)

🌐 [diabetes-act.com.au](http://diabetes-act.com.au)

### Diabetes Queensland

☎ **1800 637 700** 🌐 [diabetesqld.org.au](http://diabetesqld.org.au)

### Diabetes SA

☎ **1800 637 700** 🌐 [diabetessa.com.au](http://diabetessa.com.au)

### Diabetes Tasmania

☎ **1800 637 700** 🌐 [diabetestas.org.au](http://diabetestas.org.au)

### Diabetes Victoria

☎ **1800 637 700** 🌐 [diabetesvic.org.au](http://diabetesvic.org.au)

### Diabetes WA

☎ **1800 637 700** 🌐 [diabeteswa.com.au](http://diabeteswa.com.au)

### Healthy Living NT

☎ **08 8927 8488** 🌐 [healthylivingnt.org.au](http://healthylivingnt.org.au)

### National Diabetes Services Scheme

A wide range of services and support is available through the NDSS to help you manage your diabetes. This includes information on diabetes management through the NDSS Helpline and website. The products, services and education programs available can help you stay on top of your diabetes.

Visit [ndss.com.au](http://ndss.com.au) for more information.

Contact your state/territory Aboriginal community controlled health organisation:

### Aboriginal Health and Medical Research Council of New South Wales

☎ **02 9212 4777** 🌐 [ahmrc.org.au](http://ahmrc.org.au)

### Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation

☎ **03 9411 9411** 🌐 [vaccho.org.au](http://vaccho.org.au)

### Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Health Council

☎ **07 3328 8500** 🌐 [qaihc.com.au](http://qaihc.com.au)

### Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia

☎ **08 9227 1631** 🌐 [ahcwa.org.au](http://ahcwa.org.au)

### Aboriginal Health Council of South Australia

☎ **08 8273 7200** 🌐 [ahcsa.org.au](http://ahcsa.org.au)

### Aboriginal Medical Services Alliance Northern Territory

☎ **08 8944 6666** 🌐 [amsant.org.au](http://amsant.org.au)

### Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre

☎ **03 6234 0700** 🌐 [tacinc.com.au](http://tacinc.com.au)

### Winnunga Nimmityjah Aboriginal Health Service (ACT)

☎ **02 6284 6222** 🌐 [winnunga.org.au](http://winnunga.org.au)

If you have type 1 diabetes, you may also be interested in the following:

### Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF)

For one-on-one peer support:

🌐 [jdrf.org.au/peersupport](http://jdrf.org.au/peersupport)

For group peer support:

🌐 [jdrf.org.au/type-1-diabetes/support-groups](http://jdrf.org.au/type-1-diabetes/support-groups)

✉ [peersupport@jdrf.org.au](mailto:peersupport@jdrf.org.au)

Phone by state/territory:

NSW ☎ **02 9020 6100**

VIC/TAS ☎ **03 8374 6200**

QLD/NT ☎ **07 3046 2700**

WA ☎ **08 6444 0700**

SA ☎ **08 8490 0100**

ACT ☎ **02 6109 4900**

You can also ask your diabetes health care team about any peer support programs they may be aware of.

\* Source: National Diabetes Services Scheme factsheet. Developed in collaboration with The Australian Centre for Behavioural Research in Diabetes, a partnership for better health between Diabetes Victoria and Deakin University. It is intended as a guide only and should not replace individual medical advice. If you have any concerns about your health or further questions, you should contact your health professional.