

Your support options

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There are many ways to get emotional support. don't be afraid to shop around for what suits you. Your local [PLWHA](#) [1]Person (or People) Living with HIV/AIDS. or AIDS Council is a good source of information and contacts for different kinds of support. See links pages. See also the section on Mental Wellbeing in the Looking after Our Health section.

Peer Support

Peer support means that other people with HIV provide the support. Peer support groups for gay men are relatively easy to find through AIDS Councils, but if you are a woman or heterosexual man, it may be more difficult to access such support. There are groups for heterosexual men and women in some capital cities (See Contacts page).

Counselling

You don't have to be in a crisis to benefit from counselling. Counselling is usually designed to help you sort through your feelings, identify coping strategies and find ways to move forward. Getting counselling can sometimes prevent a crisis from happening. It is important to shop around for a counsellor whose approach matches what you want. You can usually arrange for a test visit to talk about how they work. Free counselling is often available through AIDS Councils, sexual health centres or hospitals.

PLWHA organisations

People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) organisations can provide an opportunity for people with HIV/AIDS to work together on issues that are important to them. Support from the people you are working with can be a spin off from working in the organisation. If you don't have time to help, you can still join and access newsletters, services, information sessions and social events.

Positive Retreats

These are run on an irregular basis by PLWHA organisations, AIDS Councils and groups such as Poz Het. Retreats are an opportunity to get away with a group of other HIV positive people in a comfortable environment and relax, make friends, and get support and information.

Support for families

The Paediatric HIV Service at Sydney Children's Hospital provides resources and advice on the management of HIV in children nation-wide. For more info call 02 9382 1654. The service co-ordinates Camp Goodtime, an annual national camp for children and families living with HIV/AIDS. The camp gives children and parents an opportunity to meet with other families facing similar situations. For more info about Camp Goodtime call 02 9382 1851.

Mental health programs

AIDS Councils, PLWHA organisations and sexual health centres at times run various programs to support people with depression. Give them a call to find out what's available or check out their websites.

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- [Social and emotional support](#)

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/119>

[2] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/having-a-life/where-we-get-support>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/having-a-life/sex-the-good-the-bad-and-the-sublime>