

Coping Strategies: A little while on

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As time passes, you may be more comfortable with the news or you may be feeling ambivalent. You may also be feeling shock, anger, guilt, shame or depression. These feelings are normal and for most people, they pass in time.

You may be ready to find out more about what it means to be HIV positive. Along with this booklet, there are many other resources and booklets available at AIDS Councils and PLWHA organisations in each state and territory. You can also take a look on the Internet. Several good sites include:

- Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations ([AFAO](http://www.afao.org.au) [1] Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. AFAO is the peak non-government organisation representing Australia's community-based response to HIV/AIDS. AFAO's work includes education, policy, advocacy and international projects.) —www.afao.org.au [2]
- National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (NAPWA)—www.napwa.org.au [3]
- The Body (United States) —www.thebody.com [4]
- Medscape (United States) —www.medscape.com [5]
- Australasian Society for HIV Medicine ([ASHM](http://www.ashm.org.au) [6] Australasian Society for HIV Medicine. The peak Australasian organisation representing the medical and health sector in HIV/AIDS and related areas.) —www.ashm.org.au [7]

As time goes on, many people feel they are in a better position to start making decisions about work, life goals and social connections. Some people decide to make major changes while others are happy to continue as before. If you have been seeing a counsellor, attending a peer support group, talking to a peer worker or your partner, friends or family, it's good to keep talking – even if you are feeling a little bit better. Issues might come up over the coming weeks or months and you may be better placed to work through these issues if you keep talking.

Your doctor will probably want to see you again after a few weeks to see what is happening with the [virus](#) [8] A small infective organism which is incapable of reproducing outside a host cell. and your immune system. It's good to get into a pattern of regular health monitoring. Hopefully, you have developed a good rapport with your doctor by now. If not, you could consider finding someone who you feel more comfortable with.

If you have started taking treatments, ask how they are working for you. Have you made the right choice? Are the side effects subsiding? Are the treatments fitting into your lifestyle? If not, you might want to consider changing to a more suitable treatment regimen. You have the right to stop taking treatments if you are not happy with how things have been working, but be sure to talk with your doctor about this decision as treatment breaks can be harmful to your health – in the short and long terms. Always discuss the ramifications of choices with your doctor so you can make an informed choice. If you're having trouble remembering treatments some doctors organise SMS messages as reminders.

If you haven't started treatments, your doctor may be encouraging you to begin. Take your time and learn as much as you can about the pros and cons before making up your mind. Your local AIDS Council and PLWHA organisations can be a good start for information on treatments decision making. (See page 24 for more information on treatments decision making.)

Regardless of whether or not you are on treatments, talking to other positive people about their experiences can help you with things like commencing treatments, adherence (sticking with treatments), or side effects.

Checklist

- Regular health monitoring can help you manage HIV
- Talk to other positive people about their experience with treatments

Ken: "If I ever get sick I want some kind of warning so as to be better prepared psychologically. Still it's stressful. I

often get emotional sitting in the specialist's waiting room wondering what the current situation is and the implications of the test results. Sometimes it's not easy."

[◀ Having children](#) [9][up](#) [10][Looking after your health: Viral load and CD4 count](#) ▶ [11]

Links:

[1] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/385>

[2] <http://www.afao.org.au>

[3] <http://www.napwa.org.au>

[4] <http://www.thebody.com>

[5] <http://www.medscape.com>

[6] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/382>

[7] <http://www.ashm.org.au>

[8] <http://www.napwa.org.au/glossary/term/125>

[9] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/next-steps/having-children>

[10] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/next-steps>

[11] <http://www.napwa.org.au/resource/next-steps/looking-after-your-health-viral-load-and-cd4-count>