



**CYSTIC  
FIBROSIS**  
Queensland

## Emotional and psychosocial wellbeing

In each of our lives we will be faced with scenarios that can be challenging or complex and which may produce feelings and emotions we haven't experienced before. Sometimes these can be directly related to the experience of living with cystic fibrosis and the expectations that come with it, while other times our deepest concerns or worries are not necessarily cystic fibrosis-related at all. During transition and into young adulthood you may have moments or times where you experience a change in your day-to-day emotional wellbeing. Being able to initially identify the reason for these changes is far less important than just being aware of any change and finding a safe way to express those feelings and emotions to someone you trust. This can be difficult to do, especially at times when we are feeling our most vulnerable, but expressing feelings is often the start of addressing them.

Living with cystic fibrosis is only one aspect of life and like all other young adults there will be good times and bad. During the more difficult moments it can be comforting to know other adults with cystic fibrosis have shared that anger, overwhelm, sadness and hopelessness were all common states they sought help with, during adolescence and into adulthood. Others shared that with age they became better at noticing the signs of when they weren't coping and were therefore able to act and seek support more quickly. Building self-awareness and effective self-expression will look and feel different for everybody with no single best way to achieve it. There are, however, many ways to help navigate your way through it! Below are some support options shared by other adults with cystic fibrosis that were key to maintaining their emotional wellbeing during, and after, transition.

### Sharing experiences via peer support

Sometimes there is no better person to talk to than someone who knows first-hand what you may be experiencing. Because of this, some individuals find it helpful connecting online with others living with cystic fibrosis, especially when they have questions about transition and may no longer be living with, or feel close to, their usual support network. Sharing experiences can help remind us we are not alone but are in fact part of a wide community and offer new perspectives on life. Connecting online is available via different platforms with Support and Peer Groups - **CF Strong** being one of them.

### Counselling and Social Worker services

As part of your cystic fibrosis clinical care team, you will generally have access to a Social Worker or similar and you may find utilising their services more often during transition beneficial. There are also options such as community counsellors or psychologists that can help, referrals may be needed for these services which can be accessed through your General Practitioner (GP).



## Employee Assistance Programs

If you work for a company that offers an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) you may be able to access psychology or counselling services. This option, if available, can offer you a space to discuss your needs outside your regular cystic fibrosis clinical care. There may or may not be a cost with this service, speak with your employer or EAP representative directly to find out more.

## Knowledge check!

### I know and understand...

- ☐ How to look for and recognise the signs of when I am not coping.
- ☐ How to express how I am feeling in a safe way.
- ☐ What steps do I need to take to find the support that feels right for me.
- ☐ Cystic fibrosis is only one aspect of my being, and I may also need support in other areas of my life.
- ☐ Where to go for help if I need further assistance or more information.

