

STRONGER TOGETHER

In the lead up to, and following, the announcement regarding the postal survey, here are a number of tips to help you stay strong and resilient.

Plan where you want to be and who you want to be with

Consider the place you'll be at and the people you'll be with when the results are revealed. Why not attend a community 'YES' event? Regardless of the vote, it's important to be around friends and allies.

It's okay to step away

The sheer volume of stuff on social media has been overwhelming throughout the debate and will continue to rage on regardless of the result. If you need a break, take it. Remember that it's okay to step away.

Think about who you would want to thank

We are not alone and allies are everywhere. Consider thanking the people who stood up for us during this difficult time. In your own circle, express gratitude to those who offered and gave support.

Plan activities, get creative, keep busy

You might find yourself feeling overwhelmed in the days and weeks following the announcement. Plan some activities to keep yourself busy and distracted. Get creative, read a book, have a picnic with friends and loved ones.

Channel your energy into helping others

The thought of what lies ahead can be stressful. Why not channel your energy into helping others? The more you give, the better you'll feel. Volunteer for a local service of any kind. Help a friend, a neighbour, a stranger.

Remember to look after yourself

The debate will continue well after the announcement of the result and this can be draining and exhausting. So it's important to look after your physical health. Keep your energy levels up. Eat nourishing food, stay hydrated, go for a run.

Come back out in your own time

During the horrible debate, some may have chosen to take time out from friends, family and the community. This is self-protection and what some needed to do. Take your time. We'll be here for you when you're ready to come back out.

Remain positive

Even if it's a 'yes', there is still a long way to go. Stay positive in all your engagements. Be respectful, patient, kind and act with dignity.

Help is here if you need it

Even if it's a 'yes', you may feel down because it has been a gruelling process. You are not alone. Our community have all experienced feelings of anger, fear, sadness and frustration. Reach out if you need to. Help is at hand.

Ask your friends how they are going

It has been a distressing time for many in our community. Continue to ask your friends, family and community members how they're going. Let's keep checking in on each other.

REMEMBER

In the unlikely event that things do not go our way, we will all feel despair, anger, resentment, grief and loss. It's important to be with those you love, talk about how you feel and remember that we will come through this. Our love and our resilience will last longer than any postal survey and its outcomes.

ACON will have additional counselling staff in the lead up to, and after, the announcement to assist people needing support. Call us on (02) 9206 2000 or visit acon.org.au.

You can also get in contact with mental health organisations such as QLife (qlife.org.au), Beyond Blue, SANE Australia, Twenty10, headspace, RA, Lifeline and the Black Dog Institute.

This has been put together by ACON counsellors and builds on our resource, 'Staying Strong During The Marriage Equality Debate'. Access that resource at acon.org.au.