

## HOW TO RISE ABOVE THE NOISE

The recent debate on 'religious freedoms' has again put LGBTIQ people under the spotlight and many in our community are feeling the impact of the noise. Here are some practical tips on keeping healthy and strong during this time.

### ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR FEELINGS

Acknowledge that a particular issue has made you feel angry or distressed by admitting it to yourself and others. Telling someone that you feel angry about what is being said is more helpful than just acting out anger and frustration.

### LOG OFF

It is likely that the noise will continue in the media and social media. Consider curating your feeds to help filter distressing content and posters. If you need a break from social media, take it. Remember, it's okay to step away.

### STAY ACTIVE

We know how exhausting and draining debates about our communities and our lives can be, so be sure to look after your body by getting sleep, eating well, staying hydrated and having plenty of fresh air. It's important to look after physical health.

### HAVE A BREAK

Take time out. Get away for a day, a weekend or an entire week! Take a stroll in the park or around your neighbourhood, swim at the beach or your local pool, see a movie or a play – do what helps soothe your mind and your heart. Engage your senses!

### CHANNEL YOUR ENERGY

The thought of being put through the wringer once again can be upsetting. Why not channel your energy into a good cause? If you're passionate about an issue, get involved and volunteer. Or help a friend's project, a community group or local neighbourhood centre.

### LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER

It has been a distressing time. Check in on your friends and family. Some LGBTIQ peers from faith backgrounds may be feeling extra raw. Let others know that you're there if they need you. Look out for each other.

### HELP IS ALWAYS HERE

No matter what you do, you may still feel down because of the noise. You are not alone. Reach out if you need to. There are many support services and groups, including LGBTIQ-inclusive faith congregations. Help is at hand.

### CLEAR YOUR THINKING

When you're upset, distressed or angry, your thinking can get exaggerated. Try replacing these kinds of thoughts with more useful, constructive ones and you may find that this has an effect on the way you feel.

### UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY

Distracting your mind can help dampen the noise. Writing in a journal can provide perspective and help you understand your emotions. Being creative can often help too such as painting, pottery, knitting, drawing, baking a cake etc.

### REMEMBER

Our communities are resilient; we have been subjected time and time again to different struggles. This debate may be particularly challenging for LGBTIQ people of colour and of faith. But remember: our communities are strong and we can face bigotry and hatred that comes our way together.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

ACON provides a range of counselling services for LGBTIQ people in need of support and assistance. ACON can also provide links to other peer and support groups. Call (02) 9206 2000 or visit [acon.org.au](http://acon.org.au).

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

This resource has been put together by ACON counsellors.

