**We can overcome: Recovery and resilience**

Sexuality and gender diverse people experience mental distress at rates higher than the general population. Our communities’ rate of mental distress is not because there’s something ‘wrong’ with us (there isn’t! We’re amazing!). Often, mental distress can be attributed, in part, to the experiences of stigma and discrimination we face. Despite this, our communities are strong and demonstrate an incredible capacity for strength and resilience. We’ve compiled some tips for developing resilience when times are tough.

**You are not alone:** Everyone has tough times. You might feel incredibly isolated in your experience of distress. Reaching out to the people around you can help remind you that others have been through it and can help.

**Be your biggest cheerleader**: Sometimes when we’re experiencing distress, we can be really hard on ourselves. Learning to quiet that inner voice and treat yourself with compassion and care can help you build resilience and develop the knowledge that you’re worth it – because you are.

**Set one goal:** Every achievement deserves to be celebrated. Some days that might be climbing a mountain, other days it might be getting out of bed. When things are hard, setting one small and manageable goal, and celebrating when you achieve that can go a long way.

**Recovery is a journey**: It’s not about being ‘cured’. Recovery is about developing skills, adding to your toolbelt, and recognising that distress doesn’t magically ‘go away’. It’s about knowing that next time you experience distress, you have the strength, resilience, and capacity to not let it overcome you.

**It’s okay to not be okay:** Tough times happen. Use your resilience toolkit to cope when things aren’t okay. Remember: how did you get through it last time? If you haven’t been through it before, ask someone else for help. Try to practice (‘radical’) self-care. These feelings will pass.

**There is strength in distress**: While experiences of poor mental health can be debilitating, these experiences also give us compassion, empathy, patience and kindness for others, as well as an immense amount of strength and self-knowledge. Celebrate that.

**It’s okay to ask for help:** Since you’re now your biggest cheerleader, remember that you’re worthy of support. The people around you love you unconditionally, care about you, and want to help however they can. It can be hard or scary to be vulnerable in front of others, but we all need help sometimes.

**Professional support is available**: You wouldn’t try and heal a broken leg by yourself, so why not look after your mental health in the same way? Mental health professionals are there to help, and give you the tools you need to stay resilient: whether that’s mindfulness, medication, or somewhere in between. Recovery looks different for everyone, find what’s right for you!

*Help is available. ACON provides confidential counselling to people in our communities seeking support in relation to their mental health and wellbeing. Contact ACON on (02) 9206 2000 or 1800 063 060 or visit acon.org.au You can also get in contact with other mental health services including QLife on 1800 184 527, the Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467 or Lifeline on 13 11 14.*