

Getting support

Resource guide | GIWL Youth Summit

Activist burnout

Being an activist can be rewarding, but also challenging and stressful. You may face many pressures and risks, such as burnout, trauma, harassment, or violence. That's why it's important to take care of your wellbeing and mental health, not only for yourself, but also for your cause and your community.

In this guide, we'll share some tips and resources on how to practice self-care, cope with stress, and seek support when you need it. We hope this guide will help you to stay healthy, resilient, and effective in your activism.

Contributing factors

Activists who work for social change often face challenges and risks that can affect their wellbeing.

However, the local context across countries can also impact how activists cope with these challenges and access support. Some of the factors that can influence the wellbeing of activists in different contexts are...

- **The political and legal environment** – Activists may face different levels of repression, censorship, surveillance, harassment, intimidation, or violence from the state or other actors depending on the country they operate in. This can create a climate of fear, stress, and insecurity that can undermine their mental and physical health. Activists may also have different degrees of freedom and protection to express their views, organize, mobilise, or access justice and legal aid.
- **The social and cultural norms** – Activists may encounter different expectations, values, beliefs, or stereotypes from their families, communities, or society at large depending on the country they live in. This can affect their sense of identity, belonging, or acceptance as well as their relationships and social support networks. Activists may also face different forms of discrimination, stigma, or marginalization based on their gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, or other aspects of their identity or work.
- **Availability & accessibility of resources** – Activists may have different opportunities and challenges to access resources that can enhance their wellbeing depending on the country they work in. This can include financial resources, such as

funding, grants, or donations; material resources, such as equipment, tools, or infrastructure; human resources, such as staff, volunteers, or allies; and informational resources, such as data, evidence, or knowledge. Activists may also have different options and barriers to access services that can support their wellbeing, such as health care, education, counselling, or therapy.

- **The diversity and solidarity of the activist community** – Activists may have different experiences of working with other activists within or across movements depending on the country they collaborate in. This can affect their sense of solidarity, trust, cooperation, or learning as well as their exposure to conflicts, tensions, or competition. Activists may also have different levels of diversity and inclusion within their movements based on the representation and participation of different groups and perspectives.

Support services

Lifeline

Crisis support and suicide prevention service for all Australians experiencing emotional distress.

Call: 13 11 14 | Text: 0477 13 11 14 | Online chat | Open: 24/7

Head to Health

Support service that helps all Australians access the mental health and wellbeing services that are right for them.

Call: 1800 595 212 | Open: 8:30am-5pm weekdays

QLife

Provides anonymous and free LGBTQIA+ peer support and referral for people wanting to talk about sexuality, identity, gender, bodies, feelings or relationships.

Call: 1800 184 527 | Online chat | Open: 3pm-midnight daily

13Yarn

Crisis support line for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People.

Call: 13 92 76 | Open: 24/7

1800 respect

National sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence/sexual assault.

Call: 1800 737 732 | Online chat | Open: 24/7