



# IT'S OKAY TO SEEK HELP.

**ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE MALE.**

**“The first step is by far the toughest step that you'll have to take,” says Dave, an ordinary outback Aussie bloke who struggled through years of depression and anxiety.**

“It's not always going to be roses,” he says. “There's going to be ups and downs, good days and bad days, but that first step is by far the hardest.”

“The thing I'd like people to know, especially if you're a male, is it's okay to seek help.”

When Dave first connected with the Outback Futures team, he was managing a remote Queensland property, but life was pretty rough. He had battled with feelings of hopelessness and despair. He had previously been diagnosed with depression, and had tried taking medication. This father of four was socially isolated, and had withdrawn even within his small rural community.

“The first session I spent with the counsellor, I think I sat there for almost an hour with tears coming out of my eyes non-stop,” Dave shares.

\*names have been changed to respect this family's privacy



"When the session was over, I went back to our accommodation, curled up in the foetal position and cried some more, and then slept for three or four hours."

Conversations with his counsellor revealed Dave was socially isolating himself because of the fear and shame he felt around his very low literacy level, undiagnosed learning challenges, and the associated sense of failure.

"I was facing depression, anxiety, and dyslexia," Dave says.

Dave was avoiding social and community gatherings where others might realise he struggled with reading and writing; and he had even given up a long held dream of owning his own property, dreading the huge hurdles that he imagined would be part of making that happen.

Dave was supported as he improved his reading and writing, with regular early morning sessions before his work day started. "Once the Outback Futures team worked out what it was that I needed, a lot of the work they did for me was over the phone," shares Dave.

"They provided learning support for my writing, and counselling for my depression and anxiety."

"For me that was great," Dave says. "It let me do what I needed to do in the safety of my own home."

Dave understands the difficulties people in rural and remote communities have accessing services, and the barriers that often prevent them from seeking help. "If I was to pick up those same services in town, I would have had to travel five hours one way."

## **"And men are very hard to get off their property at any time."**

Through Dave's courage to ask for help, and his determination to make changes, his life has been transformed.

"The Outback Futures team gave me the ability to believe in myself, and that I could do what I thought was impossible with regards to reading and writing," shares Dave.

"They showed love, compassion, and respect; and they understood the challenges that we face out in rural communities."

"And they helped me discover that there are more good days than bad."

It's not just Dave's life that's been impacted. When Dave and his wife noticed one of their kids facing similar struggles with learning, their son was diagnosed with dyslexia. Dave's son now receives learning and literacy support, so he can grow into adulthood with confidence and capacity in reading and writing.

Through Dave's example, his kids are enabled and confident to seek help, no matter what challenges they face. Dave and his amazing wife are both now advocates for mental health support in their communities.

And Dave and his wife bought their own land and herd, and are pursuing the dream Dave never thought they could achieve.