

Strategies to consider:

- **understand** that you will have the need to search for a meaning.
- **explore** and rebuild self-esteem.
- **motivate** your thoughts to keep a positive outlook.
- **support** from loved ones, being treated as "normal".
- **seek** and understand professional sympathetic support.
- **wear** wigs, hats, beanies and scarves or be bold and go bare.
- **accept** the journey of mixed feelings - it's okay to have bad days.
- **focus** on who you are and what you want from life.
- **acknowledge** the unpredictability of Alopecia Areata.
- **inform** others and increase community awareness.
- **self empowerment** by helping others with Alopecia Areata.

This brochure aims to help both males and females accept and cope with changes that result from a diagnosis of Alopecia Areata.

The information presented is the result of two studies conducted in 2013 to which 97 Australian women (18+) and 8 Australian men suffering some form of Alopecia Areata responded.

For discussion groups, social networks links and support group details in your area, please visit our website.

Denial

Isolation

*Supportive
Networks*

Information

Acceptance

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How do you cope with Alopecia Areata?



It's most important to realise that there is no correct way to cope with living with Alopecia Areata - your coping strategies are as individual as you are.

Self-esteem and coping



Acceptance, support, understanding

Alopecia Areata is not gender specific and can influence the way individuals view themselves and others.

Self-esteem is defined as a person's own emotional evaluation of their worth or worthiness and encompasses an individual's judgements, attitudes, beliefs and emotions about one's self.

Depression, anxiety and stress are all associated with Alopecia Areata and have the potential to negatively affect an individual's behaviours, judgements and interpretations of the world around them.

The process of coping is made doubly more difficult by society being enamoured with appearance.

Hair symbolises beauty, individuality and/or belonging to a particular social or cultural group. After being diagnosed with Alopecia Areata it's normal to experience denial and the need to continuously search for answers or even block out reality.

A period of grief ensues with physical and emotional isolation, withdrawing from loved ones, and immense fears about being rejected or stigmatised by the community are also common.

Individuals find it difficult to tackle the concept of "no cure" and often experience frustration and despair with treatments that don't get results.

How do you cope with Alopecia Aerata?

Seeking independent counselling from a professional may help to create a more positive self-esteem, leading to a lower level of stress and anxiety.

The realisation that Alopecia Areata is a journey brings a change of perspective and with this change, acceptance eventually occurs.

Supportive networks allow you to have a voice and to connect with others who are experiencing the same issues.

You can then begin to move forward, living with Alopecia Areata rather than fighting against it.

For some, the wearing of headwear disguises the condition, reducing psychological stress and the unwanted stigmatisation of Alopecia Areata, but some choose to go bare.

Moving forward

