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## KNOW YOUR CONTACTS

It is normal to feel a little overwhelmed when looking at this entire booklet for the first time. Be encouraged that you are not alone, and many young people before you have been on the same journey.

Having the right contact numbers to organisations that can help you will be very useful. Below is a list of some that might come in handy.

## CONTACT US

### Department of Child Safety, Disability Seniors and

**A:** 111 George Street, Brisbane QLD  
4000

**P:** 1800 811 810 (free call)

**W:** [www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/](http://www.cyjma.qld.gov.au/)

### Emergency Services

Police, Fire, Ambulance

**P:** 000

### ENERGEX Power Outages (24/7)

**P:** 13 62 62

### Health Advice and Information

**P:** 13 432 584

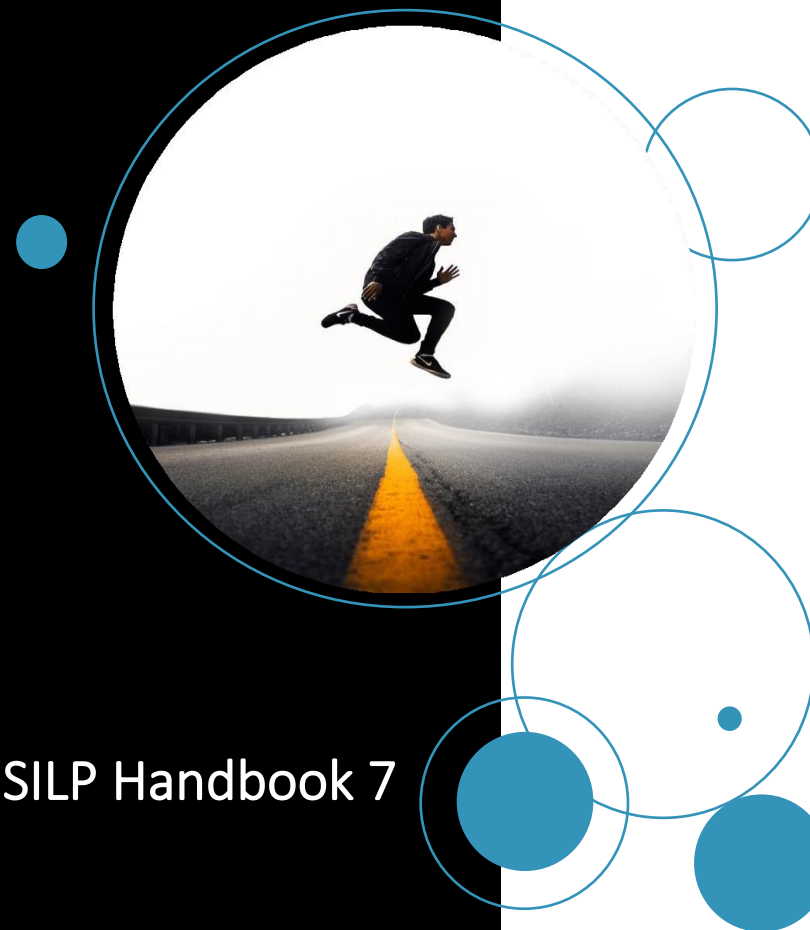
**W:** [www.health.gov.au](http://www.health.gov.au)

### Translink

**P:** 13 12 30

**W:** [www.translink.com.au](http://www.translink.com.au)

# Independent Living Skills



## SILP Handbook 7

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## NOTES

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE

During an emergency, you may not have time to make alternative plans. You may not also be aware of who to listen to for instructions. That's why it is important to know who to call and what to do under different circumstances.

### EMERGENCY (24/7)

#### 000 (Triple Zero)

To report life threatening emergencies, call Police, Fire or Ambulance.

### ENERGEX POWER OUTAGES (24/7)

#### 13 62 62

If you have lost power, if power lines come down in a big storm, or you are experiencing electricity supply problems.

#### During a severe storm, flood, or fire...

- Keep your radio or mobile on to find out what areas are affected, what roads are safe, where to go and what to do if the local emergency team asks you to leave your home.
- Evacuate your home when you are advised to do so by emergency services. Ignoring such a warning could jeopardise the safety of those who might eventually have to come to your rescue, as well as your own.
- Communicate with others when you have left and where you went.
- Never cross a flooded area. If it is flooded, forget it!
- If you are indoors, stay away from windows, doors, and fireplaces.
- If you are outside and can see lightning or hear thunder, you are in danger of being hit. Seek shelter immediately.
- During thunderstorms, you should also stay away from items that conduct electricity, such as corded telephones, appliances, sinks, bathtubs, radiators, and metal pipes.
- If you are involved in a house fire or surrounding bush fire, exit as soon as possible to the safest route. Do not try and collect your belongings.

**HOT TIP:** Remember to always lock and secure your home when you leave.

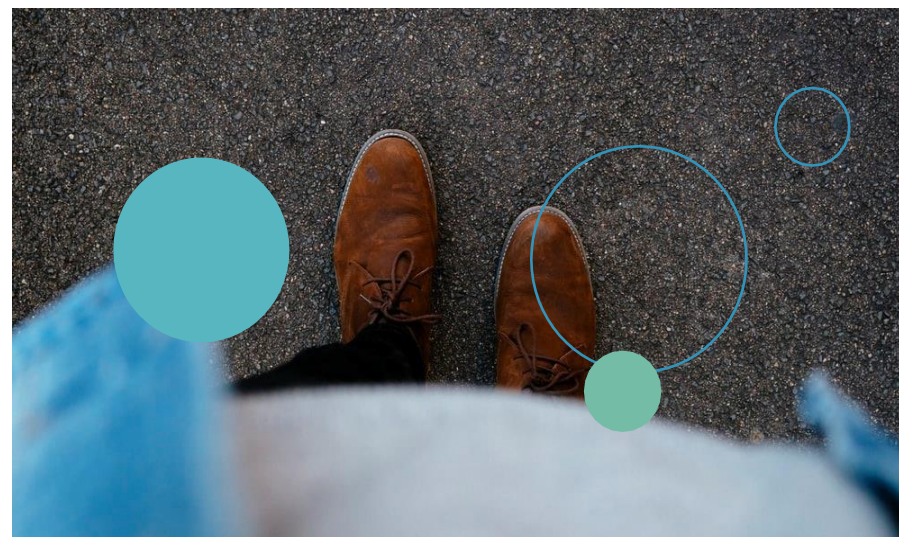
## INTRODUCTION

Independent living skills are vital for all adults, regardless of their life experiences. What people already know, and what still needs to be learned varies for each person. We need to make sure that we are checking in with what you know and filling in the gaps for what you need to learn.

As you transition into adulthood, we would like to support you to continue to learn and develop living skills that will allow you to build confidence in independent living tasks, such as housekeeping, daily routines and scheduled, managing your finances, grocery shopping, paying your bills, daily living skills, and money management.

Throughout this booklet you will find helpful information on:

- Meal planning, cooking and nutrition;
- Money management;
- Domestic skills such as laundry and cleaning;
- Personal care and hygiene;
- Organising and attending appointments; and
- General social skills.



## INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS CHECKLIST

This checklist is a tool that will highlight the information about some of the skills, knowledge, tips and tricks that will help you live independently as an adult. in the future.

How would you rate your confidence on a scale of 1 to 4? 1 – not confident at all, 2 – some confidence, 3 – mostly confident, 4 – very confident				
Question	1	2	3	4
I cook meals for myself, and store food properly				
I plan a daily/weekly menu				
I prepare a shopping list and buy groceries				
I use kitchen appliances (e.g. microwave, oven)				
I wash clothes, hang out, bring in and put them away				
I clean the toilet, shower, and kitchen				
I keep living areas tidy				
I'm able to prevent and respond to fire				
I know how to protect against possible break ins				
I change linen and keep my bedroom neat and tidy				
I can get myself around on public transport				
I advise appropriate people/trades people/property managers of maintenance issues in a residence				
I know where to go to get emergency relief assistance (food, money, assistance with bills), if required				
I know how to look for specials, or save money by buying larger quantities of items				
What are the main living skills you'd like to learn at the moment?				

## GETTING AROUND

Brisbane is an easy city to get around. The city has a great range of options for public transport, driving and walking. To use public transport including buses, trains, and ferries in Brisbane, it's recommended that you purchase a TransLink Go Card. You can purchase a Go Card at the airport or from convenience stores and train stations throughout the city.

You'll need to load the Go Card with money to cover your fares before taking any trips on public transport. You can add money to the card at fare machines and Go Card retailers across the city. To start your ride, tap your card on the reader when you board your selected mode of transport, and be sure to tap off when you disembark.

Go Cards can be purchased online through the TransLink website or at over 600 retail outlets, including 7-11 stores and selected newsagencies. Locations of Go Card retailers can be found on the TransLink website.



**Plan your journey with Translink's journey planner:**

[www.translink.com.au/plan-your-journey/journey-planner](http://www.translink.com.au/plan-your-journey/journey-planner) or call 13 12 30. You can also call Translink for travel advice and information 24/7.

**HOT TIP:** Eligible job seekers can **apply online** for a 50% concession fare on TransLink public transport services, regional *qconnect* bus services and approved regional ferry services. Find more information and apply at [www.translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/concessions/job-seekers](http://www.translink.com.au/tickets-and-fares/concessions/job-seekers)

## BUDGETING

		Expected	Actual	Difference
Income				
Income source:		\$	\$	\$
Income source:		\$	\$	\$
Housing				
Rent		\$	\$	\$
Electricity		\$	\$	\$
Gas		\$	\$	\$
Other:		\$	\$	\$
Fortnightly Living Expenses				
Groceries		\$	\$	\$
Internet		\$	\$	\$
Mobile Plan/Credit		\$	\$	\$
Clothing		\$	\$	\$
Hair and beauty		\$	\$	\$
Entertainment		\$	\$	\$
Medication		\$	\$	\$
Gym membership		\$	\$	\$
Sports and activities		\$	\$	\$
Pet food		\$	\$	\$
Veterinarians/pet care		\$	\$	\$
Subscriptions (e.g. Netflix, Stan, YouTube)		\$	\$	\$
Paying off debt		\$	\$	\$
Credit card		\$	\$	\$
Other loans		\$	\$	\$
Gifts		\$	\$	\$
Other:		\$	\$	\$
Transport				
Car		\$	\$	\$
Fuel		\$	\$	\$
Insurance		\$	\$	\$
Go Card		\$	\$	\$
Fines		\$	\$	\$
Driving lessons		\$	\$	\$
Other:		\$	\$	\$
Fortnightly summary				
Total income	Total expenses	Total difference	Total F/N savings	Total savings
\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

## MEAL PLANNING AND SHOPPING

The foods you eat have big effects on your health and quality of life. Many experts suggest that preparing meals in advance gives you a more balanced diet. Meal planning is asking the 'what's for dinner' question once for the whole week, instead of every night, and then shopping for and prepping the ingredients before cooking.

Meal planning not only saves you time and money, but it also eliminates waste, balances your meal choices, and lowers your frustrations. The simplest way to approach meal planning is with three steps:

1. Select your dinners and the recipes
2. Shop for the ingredients
3. Prepare those ingredients

Why should you eat a healthy balanced diet? Not only does food affect your mood if you aren't feeding your body the right amount of energy, but research also continues to link serious diseases to a poor diet. For example, eating health can drastically reduce your chances of developing heart disease and cancer, the world's leading killers. A good diet can improve all aspects of life, from brain function to physical performance. In fact, food affects all your cells and organs.



Before you go to the shops and do your shopping, make sure that you check what is in your fridge and pantry. This will help eliminate overspending on products that you already have at home. Writing a shopping list will also help you see exactly what you need and keep you on track with your budget. Try not to impulse buy on items you have not included on your list. It's okay to splurge every now and again, but it can easily become an expensive habit.

## FOOD SAFETY

Taking care to prepare and cook your food safely is important in preventing illness. Food needs to be stored, handled, and cooked carefully at temperatures that avoid the spread and growth of bacteria that can make you sick.

You should store food that has to be kept cold at or below 5°C to prevent the growth of bacteria that causes food poisoning. You should store frozen food at -15°C or colder. Food doesn't immediately become unsafe when it's in the danger zone. If you're healthy, you should be able to eat food that's been properly handled and stored at the right temperature without getting sick. But if you're pregnant, elderly, preparing food for a young child, or ill, you need to be more careful, even with foods stored in the fridge.



Type of meat	Safe storage times (in the refrigerator)	Safe storage times (in the freezer)
uncooked poultry	1–2 days	9 months (pieces) to 1 year (whole)
uncooked ground meat	1–2 days	3–4 months
uncooked steaks or chops	3–4 days	4–12 months, depending on the item
uncooked fish	1–2 days	6 months
cooked poultry, meat, or fish	3–4 days	2–6 months
hot dogs and lunch meat	up to 1 week (open package) or 2 weeks (closed package)	1–2 months

It's important to wash and dry your hands and equipment:

- ✓ Before starting to prepare food
- ✓ After touching raw meat, fish, eggs, or vegetables with soil on them
- ✓ After using the toilet or blowing your nose
- ✓ After touching any sores or cuts
- ✓ After touching an animal

Drying your hands is very important as bacteria can be transferred in the moisture of damp hands. Don't handle food for 48 hours after symptoms disappear if you're sick with an infection or diarrhoea and/or vomiting.

## BUDGETING

Having a budget helps you to feel in control of your money. You can put aside money for big bills when they arrive, and plan savings to achieve your money goals. You don't need an accountant or special software to set up your own budget. Start by looking at where you are right now and where you want to be in the future.

### Step 1: Set realistic goals

Having goals/plans for your money will help you make smart spending choices. Ask yourself: What do I want my finances to look like in one year? What are my goals? Do I want to buy a car or go on a holiday? Decide what's important to you and start here.

### Step 2: Identify your income and expenses

You probably know how much you earn each month – but do you also know where it all goes? Find out by tracking what you're spending. Spend as you normally would, but for a few weeks, jot down every cent you spend. It's easy and you might be amazed by what you find out.

### Step 3: Separate needs and wants

Ask yourself: Do I want this, or do I need this? Will spending this money get me closer to my financial goals or further away? Can I live without it? Set clear priorities for yourself and the decisions become easier to make.

**A really good budgeting template can be found on page 10.**



**HOT TIP:** Saving can be hard at first, try saving \$20 a week in a high interest savings account. You'd be amazed at what it can add up to in 1 year!

## BEING SAFE IN YOUR HOME



You often learn about fire safety in school, but it's still up to you to implement those strategies at home. You can start by knowing where the smoke alarm is in each room and what to do if it goes off. Most of the time, the smoke alarm will stay quiet or it might go off if someone burns some food.

However, the entire household should have an evacuation plan in case the alarm signals a true emergency. This includes at least two ways to exit the house and techniques, such as dropping to the floor and using clothing or your hands to cover your mouth. Map out a meeting place away from the house where everyone can meet up after evacuating.

It's also important to learn about fire prevention. Always ensure that you have turned off ovens and cook tops after using them. It is also not safe to leave candles or fairy lights on all night as these can be knocked over or overhear causing fire. It is also not advised to smoke inside the house as this is also a fire hazard and can lead to accidental fires. Know how to use your fire blankets and fire extinguishers in case you need to use them in an emergency.



Whether you're staying home alone or leaving the house to go and see a friend, it is important to remember to always lock the doors and windows. Home security is vital in keeping you and your belongings safe. Have a spare house key that you can access should you be locked outside, perhaps leave it with a trusted relative or neighbour.

## COOKING SKILLS

Cooking food properly and to the right temperature reduces the risk of food poisoning. Always cook meats all the way through, making sure there is no pink left in chicken, mince, or sausages. Keep food steaming hot until you serve it. When you reheat leftover foods, make sure all parts are hot. Don't reheat food more than once. Cool leftovers quickly, ensure to cover them and put them in the fridge or freezer. Eat refrigerated leftovers in 1 to 2 days.

Cross-contamination occurs when bacteria is transferred from one place to another, such as from raw food to food that has already been prepared. Bacteria can be transferred by your hands, on cutting boards or by a knife, fork or tongs.

Raw meat, particularly chicken, is the most common source of cross-contaminating bacteria. Avoid cross-contamination when preparing food by using different chopping boards and knives, if multiple are not available, wash both the chopping board and knife and continue preparations.

Avoid cross-contamination in the fridge by storing raw and cooked foods separately in covered containers. You should also clean mincers, mixers and chopping boards carefully to make sure there is no residue left on them.

You should always cook in a clean environment; this includes wiping down benches and ensuring that all utensils are clean and sterilised with soap and water. If you are cooking bulk food, label it so you don't forget the expiry date and so it stays fresh.



## CLEANING

Germs can grow in different places and conditions, but there are certain locations that make it favourable for their transmission. Any object can become a breeding ground for the development of bacteria harmful to our health. Floors, carpets, furniture, door frames, blinds, windows, screen doors, air conditioner filters and fans can be a shelter for viruses or bacteria.

The kitchen is where several potentially dangerous items, such as wet areas (sinks and drains), items used for cleaning (sponges and dish towels) and even the same areas where food is prepared (chopping boards, countertops and utensils). Wiping down countertops and ensuring that dirty dishes aren't sitting around for too long will ensure a hygienic food preparation environment. Rubbish bins/bags should be taken out daily. Doing this will keep the house or apartment free of ants, flies, and cockroaches, especially during summer where such insects tend to reproduce even more.

The hot and humid conditions of the bathroom make it favourable to the growth of bacteria. Bathroom hygiene needs to be constantly maintained by ensuring good use of quality cleaning chemicals. Scrubbing the floor and shower screen will keep it free from soap scum.

Keep in mind that a clean house is important for your health and wellbeing. A dirty house is a germy house, and the best way to ensure that it stays clean and tidy is to clean regularly so that it doesn't become overwhelming. You can also follow a simple cleaning roster, even if it is only 30 minutes of cleaning every other day, it will make a big difference!



## PERSONAL HYGIENE

The human body can provide places for disease-causing germs and parasites to grow and multiply. These places include the skin in and around the openings to the body. It is less likely that germs and parasites will get inside the body if people have good personal hygiene habits.



### Good personal hygiene habits include:

- ✓ Showering or bathing every day, as well as washing your hair with soap or shampoo at least once a week.
- ✓ Cleaning your teeth twice a day. Brushing your teeth after each meal is the best way of making sure that gum disease and tooth decay are avoided. It is very important to clean your teeth after breakfast and immediately before going to bed.
- ✓ Washing hands with soap and water before preparing and/or eating food, during normal daily activities and after going to the toilet as disease-causing germs may get onto the hands and under the nails.
- ✓ Changing into clean clothes. Dirty clothes should be washed with laundry soap regularly. Hanging clothes in the sun to dry. The sun's rays will kill some of the disease-causing germs and parasites.
- ✓ Turning away from other people and covering the nose and mouth with a tissue or coughing/sneezing into your elbow. If this is not done, droplets of liquid containing germs from the nose and mouth will be spread in the air and other people can breathe them in or the droplets can land on food.

By being clean and tidy, people can feel more confident, especially in social situations. Our chances of succeeding either in work or social settings, or even future relationships, can be altered by maintenance of good hygiene.