

Got their back.

A practical guide for the people around someone going through separation.

You can't fix it. You can help them get through it.

Who it's for

Mates, sisters, mums, dads, workmates. Anyone who wants to help and isn't sure how.

What it costs

Nothing. Free, no sign-up. Built to be forwarded to the group chat.

Where it's from

Atlas. Private, practical tools for separated Australian parents.

The quick answer

Five things help most. In this order.

If you only read one page, read this one. The rest of the guide is the detail behind it.

1 Show up in person, not just by text.

A text is easy to leave unanswered. A knock on the door is harder to wave off.

2 Offer specific help.

Not "let me know if you need anything". Name the thing and the day.

3 Listen more than you advise.

They're already buried in advice. Ask what they want from you before you give it.

4 Help with the boring admin.

Bank calls, forms, the move. That's where people freeze, and where a second person changes everything.

5 Stay out of the fight with their ex.

Your job is them. Not the case against the other person.

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Worried right now?

Go straight to page 12.

Warning signs and who to call. In an emergency, ring 000.

What's actually happening to them

It comes in phases. Each one needs something different.

Atlas uses five phases. The timings are rough, and people slide back and forth, especially around court dates, handovers and holidays.

Phase	What you'll notice	What they need	What to avoid
Waiting Room Before it's final	Distracted, quiet, not sleeping. Talking around something without saying it.	A private, no-judgement place to think out loud.	Pushing them to decide. Telling anyone else.
Survive 0–6 months	Chaos. Forgotten things, cancelled plans, flat one day and wired the next.	Food, sleep, logistics. Someone else holding a few of the balls.	Big-picture advice. "Everything happens for a reason."
Stabilise 6–18 months	More functional, still tired. Money stress. New routines that keep wobbling.	Help building systems: the budget, the new place, the paperwork.	Assuming they're over it because they're coping.
Rebuild 18 months–3 years	Energy coming back. New routines. Setbacks around dates and milestones.	Normal life. Plans, company, things that aren't the separation.	Making every catch-up about the ex.
New Chapter 3 years +	Mostly settled. Hard days around anniversaries, the kids' milestones, new partners.	To be seen as who they are now.	Bringing up the old story uninvited.

The one thing to remember

When they go quiet, it's usually overload. Not that they're fine.

Why they won't ask

They won't ask. That's not the same as not needing.

Under this much load, going quiet is normal. It isn't laziness or ingratitude. Here's what's usually behind it.

Avoidance

When everything is urgent, nothing gets opened.

The letters pile up, the calls go unreturned. It's the brain protecting itself, not a lack of care.

Shame

Separation can feel like a public failure.

Asking for help makes it more real, and more visible. Staying quiet keeps it smaller.

Not wanting to be a burden

They think they've used up their asks.

Week one, people offer. By week six, they assume everyone's moved on, so they stop reaching out.

Fear of "I told you so"

Even from people who would never say it.

Admitting things are bad can feel like handing someone a verdict. Make it safe not to explain.

So

Don't wait to be asked.

Small.

Easy to say yes to.

Specific.

They don't have to think.

Dated.

A day and a time on it.

Like this

"I'm doing a Bunnings run Saturday morning. I'll pick you up at 9."

What to say

Say less. Mean it more.

You don't need the perfect line. You need to avoid the ones that make them do more work.

Say

Instead of

"I'm coming round Thursday with dinner."

"Let me know if you need anything."

"That sounds really hard."

"You're better off without them."

"Do you want help, or do you just want to vent?"

An action plan nobody asked for.

"What's the next thing you have to deal with?"

"So what happened?", on repeat.

"I'm not going anywhere."

"Everything happens for a reason."

"You don't have to decide that today."

"If I were you, I'd..."

"How are you sleeping?"

"You look exhausted."

"Want me to tell the others, so you don't have to?"

Telling the others without asking.

Two hard rules.

Never badmouth the ex in front of the kids.

They're half that person. They hear everything.

Don't forward gossip.

In either direction. Even when it's meant kindly.

Offer the thing. Not the idea of the thing.

Grouped by phase. Pick one, put a day on it, and send it today. The words are on the next page.

Survive

Take something off their plate. Today.

Help with the move

Boxes, a trailer, and someone who doesn't need directing.

A Bunnings run

The new place always needs something. You drive.

Meals for a week

Drop and go. No need to come in or chat.

Take the kids Sunday afternoon

A few hours to sleep, cry or face the paperwork.

Sit with them while they ring the bank

Hold the pen. Write down the reference number.

Do a grocery shop

Their list, your trolley.

Stabilise

Help them build the systems.

Set up the new place

Beds made, a working kitchen, something on the walls.

A budget session

Rough numbers at their table. The First Hour, page 8.

Go with them to an appointment

Lawyer, mediation, Centrelink. Wait in the car.

Open the letters together

Sort into now, later and bin. Ten minutes.

Rebuild

Bring back normal life.

A regular run, walk or game night

Same time every week, so they never have to organise it.

Ask about anything else

Work, footy, the book they're reading. They're more than this.

Texts you can send

Copy. Change the day. Send.

Each one names the help, the day and the time, so all they have to do is say yes.

Survive

Doing a Bunnings run Saturday. I'll pick you up at 9. Make a list.

Survive

I'm dropping dinner round Tuesday and Thursday. Anything off the menu?

Survive

Can I take the kids Sunday, 1 till 5? Park and a feed. You get the afternoon.

Survive

When you ring the bank, want me there? I'll sit with you and take notes.

Survive

I've got the trailer and Saturday free for the move. Just tell me the time.

Stabilise

Money night next Tuesday? Rough numbers, a cuppa, no judgement.

Stabilise

I'll drive you to the appointment Thursday and wait in the car. No debrief unless you want one.

Stabilise

Free Saturday. Want help putting the new place together? I'll bring the drill.

Rebuild

Running Wednesdays at 6. Join me? Same time every week.

Rebuild

Game night at mine Friday. No separation talk unless you want it.

No reply isn't a no.

Don't take silence personally. Send the next offer next week.

You make the tea. They drive the laptop.

A guided sit-down for when they're stuck. Best in person, at their kitchen table. You keep time and keep it calm. They do the typing.

One sitting · five steps

60 min

Works with Atlas's free tools. The full app makes it easier.

0–10 min

Talk. No fixing.

Let them say where things are at. Don't solve anything yet.

10–25 min

Pick the three things that matter.

Open Atlas → Today. Of everything on their mind, which three actually matter this week? Park the rest.

25–45 min

A money snapshot.

Rough numbers only: what comes in, what goes out, what's due. Close enough is fine.

45–55 min

Write the next seven days.

Into Week: kids days, appointments, and when each of the three things gets done.

55–60 min

Book the next check-in.

A date in both your calendars before you leave.

Private by design

Everything stays on their device.

You won't see it after you leave, and neither will anyone else. Not even Atlas.

Bring

A charged laptop or phone · a pen · something to eat · the letters they've been avoiding

One mate rallies. A few others follow.

That's how it usually works. Add a little structure so the help is still there in week six, when the casseroles stop.

1

coordinator

Keeps the roster, nudges people, and is the one contact, so they get one message, not twelve.

3

jobs on the roster

Meals, kids and check-ins. Keep it that simple. Add the move or appointments as they come up.

0

times they're in the chat

The group chat leaves them out. They get help, not a committee meeting about their life.

A roster that works

Example. Swap in your crew.

Week	Meals (Tue, Thu)	Kids (Sun arvo)	Check-in
1	Sam, Priya	Jo	Dad (Sat call)
2	Mel, Jo	Sam	Priya (walk)
3	Dad, Sam	Mel	Jo (coffee)
4	Priya, Mel	Jo	Sam (run)

Group chat rules

No gossip.

No taking sides in public.

Nothing you'd mind them reading.

Rotate

Spread it thin so nobody burns out.

Two meals a week from four people lasts months. Seven meals from one person lasts a fortnight.

Where you stand changes the job. Three you might be in.

Parents and in-laws

You're also the grandparents.

Stay civil with the ex.

For the kids' sake. They'll be at the same birthdays for years.

Keep your own relationship with the grandkids steady.

Same visits, same rituals. Don't make them carry messages.

Helping with money? Write down whether it's a gift or a loan.

It can matter in a property settlement. Get legal advice before large amounts change hands.

Workmates and managers

Make work the easy part.

Flexible hours where you can.

School pickups change. Appointments land in work hours.

Cover court and mediation days.

Without needing to know why.

No questions in the kitchen.

Let them choose when, and whether, to talk. [Explaining separation at work →](#)

Friends of both

No sides. Full confidence.

You don't have to pick a side. You do have to keep confidences.

What one tells you stays with you. In both directions, every time.

Be the boring, stable adult. It's the best thing you can be.

Don't quiz them.

Not about either parent, the new house, or who said what. Ask about school and footy.

Keep things the same.

Same pickup, same jokes, same Friday pizza. Predictable is the gift.

Let them love both parents out loud.

If they mention the other parent happily, be happy with them.

You're the support. Not the whole system.

Know your lane.

You're a friend, not a therapist or a lawyer. Point them to the people who are.

Boundaries are allowed.

"I can do Sundays, not 2am every night." Clear limits make help last longer.

Have your own person.

Someone you can debrief with, who isn't in the crew and doesn't know them.

When to step up

Don't wait to be sure. Act on the signs.

Most bad weeks are just bad weeks. These are the signs that mean more than that.

Warning signs worth acting on

Talk of not wanting to be here

Giving things away, tying up loose ends

Sudden calm after deep distress

Heavy drinking or drug use

Not eating or sleeping for days

Fear for their safety, or the kids', around the ex

What to do

1. Ask directly.

"Are you thinking about suicide?"
Asking won't put the idea in their head. It tells them they can be honest with you.

2. Stay with them.

In person if you can. On the phone if you can't. Don't leave them alone if they're at risk.

3. Call for help.

Ring one of the numbers below together. If anyone is in immediate danger, call 000.

Rough night? Numbers to call.

For them, or for you

Emergency
000

Lifeline
13 11 14

Beyond Blue
1300 22 4636

MensLine Australia
1300 78 99 78

1800RESPECT
1800 737 732

Family Relationship Advice
Line
1800 050 321

Atlas is practical help, not crisis support. If someone's safety is at risk, call one of these numbers, not an app.

You've got their back. This helps with the rest.

Optional. Everything in this guide works without it. If they're drowning in admin, Atlas gives them one private place to get on top of it.

What it is

\$79

Once. No subscription.

Nine private tools for life after separation: money, the week, records, admin, and the words for hard messages.

How the gift works

- 1 You pay.** One payment, from you.
- 2 You get your key by email.** Print the card from the gift page.
- 3 You pass it on.** They open Atlas when they're ready.

You can't see their data.

No accounts. No tracking. Everything stays on their device. Not you, not anyone else, not even us. Tell them that when you hand it over.

For the card. Pick one, or write your own.

**I've got your back.
This helps with the
rest.**

Atlas.

**For the admin
nobody warns you
about.**

Atlas.

**You don't have to
work it all out alone.**

Atlas.

30-day refund on gifts too.

Same as buying Atlas for yourself.

Give Atlas · \$79



Life after separation.

**Know someone who
needs this? Forward
it to the group chat.**

This guide

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