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EVERYTHING MENTAL HEALTH ... WELL, ALMOST

This month's newsletter is a little different – we look at mental health in general. We describe some of the most common mental health challenges in the Australian population. And next month we'll follow up with some less common mental health disorders.

And don't forget, our last article was about motivation vs determination. Click [here](#) to learn more, and to access all our previous articles.

If you're interested in our previous articles, please click [here](#)

If you've got a suggestion for an article, or there's something more you would like to hear about, please send us an email - click [here](#)

What Do The Statistics Say?

By Amanda Pulford
Director and Clinical Psychologist
BPpsych (Hons) MPpsych (Clin) MAPS FCCLP MACPA

The National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing of adults (16-85 years of age) provides information on the 12-month and lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in the Australian population. The survey estimated that almost half (45%) of the population in this age range will experience a mental disorder at some time in their life (that's about 8.6 million people!!). The survey also estimated that 1 in 5 (20%) of the population had

AWAKEN PSYCHOLOGY
Healing Through Growth
21 Bath Street
Glenelg South SA 5045

e : admin@awakenpsychology.com.au
w : www.awakenpsychology.com.au
fb : www.facebook.com/awakenpsychology

p : 0488 954 195
f : 08 8294 3100

experienced a common mental disorder in the previous 12 months (that's about 3.8 million people!!). So, what's the most common? Well, not surprisingly it's Anxiety Disorders (such as Social Phobia), affecting 1 in 7 (14.4%) people. Second is Affective or Mood Disorders (such as Depression), affecting 6.2% of the population. And third is Substance Use Disorders (such as Alcohol Dependence) at 5.1% of the population.

And did you know, these three types of mental illnesses often occur in combination? For example, a person with an anxiety disorder could also develop depression, or a person with depression might misuse alcohol or other drugs, in an effort to self-medicate.

Finally, the onset of mental illness is typically around mid-to-late adolescence, and Australian youth (18-24 years old) have the highest prevalence of mental illness than any other age group.

Read on to find out more about each of these common categories, their prevalence in the population, and which gender has a higher incidence rate.

Anxiety Disorders

Panic Disorder : sudden bursts of extreme anxiety that are accompanied by symptoms like a pounding heart, sweaty palms, and shortness of breath or nausea.
2.6% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women have a higher incidence than men

Agoraphobia : is anxiety about being in places or situations from which escape might be difficult or in which help may not be available in the event of having a panic attack.
2.8% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women have a higher incidence than men

Social Phobia : Strong fear of social interaction or performance situations because of the potential for embarrassment or humiliation.
4.7% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women have a higher incidence than men

Generalised Anxiety Disorder : Long periods of uncontrollable worry about everyday issues or events, which is typically accompanied by feelings of fatigue, restlessness or difficulty concentrating.
2.7% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women have a higher incidence than men

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder : Repeated thoughts, images or impulses that the person feels are inappropriate, and repetitive behaviours, designed to reduce the anxiety generated by the thoughts.
1.9% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women have a higher incidence than men

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder : Recurrent and intrusive memories of a trauma, feelings of emotional numbing and detachment, and increases in emotional arousal, such as irritability and disturbed sleep, resulting from a traumatic event or events.
6.4% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women have a higher incidence than men

Affective (Mood) Disorders

Depressive Episodes : are periods of low mood lasting at least two weeks that are accompanied by symptoms such as loss of appetite, feelings of worthlessness, difficulty concentrating and suicidal thoughts.
4.1% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women have a higher incidence than men

Dysthymia : is characterised by a more longstanding low mood lasting for two years or more.
1.3% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women have a higher incidence than men

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Bipolar Disorder : periods of elevated or irritable mood, often fluctuating with periods of depression.

*1.8% will experience over a 12-mth period
Women and men are relatively equal in rates of incidence*

Substance Use Disorders

Substance Use Disorder – Harmful :

Impaired control over the use of substances (alcohol, cannabis, stimulants, sedatives, opioids), with continued use despite considerable psychological and physical problems.

*3.5% will experience over a 12-mth period
Men have a higher incidence than women*

Substance Use Disorder – Dependence :

As with 'Harmful', however symptoms such as becoming tolerant to the effects, characteristic withdrawal symptoms, using larger amounts or for longer periods, and unsuccessful efforts to decrease or cut down.

*1.8% will experience over a 12-mth period
Men have a higher incidence than women*

The Take Away

While mental health disorders affect many Australians each year (and unfortunately the statistics show that they're on the rise), you can do something about it. Research shows that with self-care, support, and perseverance, most people can manage their mental health, and in some cases, individuals no longer identify as having mental health challenges.

So, seek support as soon as you can – from family, from friends, from your GP, from a mental health professional.

Articles

Anxiety

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/basics/anxiety>

Anxiety, or extreme apprehension and worry, is a normal reaction to stressful situations. In some cases, however, worry becomes excessive or chronic and can cause sufferers to dread everyday situations.

Depression

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/basics/depression>

Depression is an illness that increasingly afflicts people worldwide, interfering with concentration, motivation, and many other aspects of everyday functioning. It is a complex disorder, involving many systems of the body, including the immune system, either as cause or effect. It disrupts sleep and it interferes with appetite, in some cases causing weight loss, in others weight gain.

Substance Use

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/basics/addiction>

Addiction is a condition in which a person engages in the use of a substance or in a behaviour for which the rewarding effects provide a compelling incentive to repeatedly pursue the behaviour despite detrimental consequences.

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Talks

There's No Shame In Taking Care Of Your Mental Health

by Sangu Delle
https://www.ted.com/talks/sangu_delle_the_re_s_no_shame_in_taking_care_of_your_mental_health?referrer=playlist-the_struggle_of_mental_health

When stress got to be too much for Sangu Delle, he had to confront his own deep prejudice: that men shouldn't take care of their mental health. In a personal talk, Delle shares how he learned to handle anxiety in a society that's uncomfortable with emotions. As he says: "Being honest about how we feel doesn't make us weak -- it makes us human."

Don't Suffer From Your Depression in Silence

by Nikki Webber Allen
https://www.ted.com/talks/nikki_webber_allen_don_t_suffer_from_your_depression_in_silence

Having feelings isn't a sign of weakness -- they mean we're human, says producer and activist Nikki Webber Allen. Even after being diagnosed with anxiety and depression, Webber Allen felt too ashamed to tell anybody, keeping her condition a secret until a family tragedy revealed how others close to her were also suffering. In this important talk about mental health, she speaks openly about her struggle -- and why we must undo the stigma that misreads depression as a weakness and keeps sufferers from getting help.

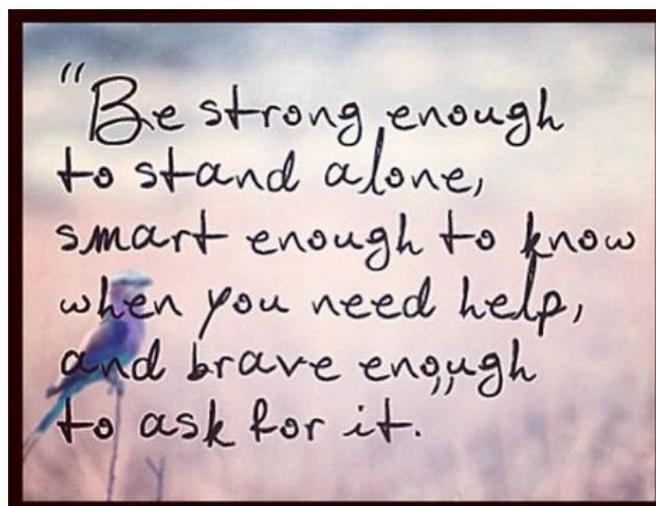
Everything You Think You Know About Addiction Is Wrong

by Johann Hari
https://www.ted.com/talks/johann_hari_everything_you_think_you_know_about_addiction_is_wrong?referrer=playlist-new_thoughts_on_addiction

What really causes addiction -- to everything from cocaine to smart-phones? And how can we overcome it? Johann Hari has seen our current methods fail

firsthand, as he has watched loved ones struggle to manage their addictions. He started to wonder why we treat addicts the way we do -- and if there might be a better way. As he shares in this deeply personal talk, his questions took him around the world, and unearthed some surprising and hopeful ways of thinking about an age-old problem.

As always, if you would like some help, please feel free to contact us on 0488 954 195, admin@awakenpsychology.com.au or [click here](#)



If at any stage, you find you need urgent assistance -- go to your closest **Emergency Department**, call the **Mental Health Emergency Line** on 13 14 65, or call **Lifeline** on 13 11 14.

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