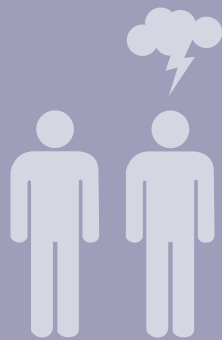


ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



PUT YOUR MIND

AT EASE
RECOGNISE > ACT > MAINTAIN

Our mental health is as important to our wellbeing as our physical health.

Why is good mental health important?

Good physical and mental health will help you to deal better with both the good and bad times, now and in the future.

Caring for your mental health will help you to :

- Feel healthier
- Get on better with your family, friends and workmates
- Perform better in your daily activities
- Get more out of life

How can we care for our mental health?

There are simple ways to maintain good mental health.

- Choose a balanced diet, regular exercise, low-risk drinking and don't smoke
- Spend time with friends and family and do at least one pleasant thing each day
- Exercise and nourish your mind with interests and hobbies and meet new friends at the same time
- Connect with your community: your local council, church, club or neighbourhood centre will be a source of ideas
- Talk to your family or mates – don't bottle it up
- Accept that it's normal to react emotionally to difficulties – don't be too hard on yourself for feeling down

What is a mental health problem?

Just as our physical health can vary from one day to the next, so can our emotional wellbeing. We can have good or poor mental health and everything in between, often depending on what's happening in our lives and how we're reacting to it. Growing older, career changes, moving interstate, deployment, leaving the defence forces, divorce, grief and loss can all affect our mental health and wellbeing. It's normal to react to such events in our lives but sometimes our reactions could be a sign of a mental health problem, particularly if they persist. Mental health problems can be mild to severe. You can do something about them yourself, and at other times you may need to seek professional help.

What is a mental health disorder?

'Mental health disorders' refers to a number of different types of conditions that are usually associated with significant distress and impact on our day-to-day life. The most common mental health disorders are anxiety, depression and alcohol misuse. Often people experience more than one of these conditions at one time.

Who experiences mental health problems?

About one in five Australians experience a mental health problem at least once in their lives - no matter what age, culture, education or income level.



And it's no different for the veteran and defence force communities, so its quite likely that you, a family member, friend or colleague could be affected.

What are the signs? Recognise and act to maintain your health

There are clear signs of potential mental health problems that you can look for, in yourself and others.

- Trouble sleeping?
- Loneliness or tiredness?
- Can't switch off?
- Avoiding crowds?
- Irritable?
- Persistent headaches?
- Drink too much?
- Too many sickies?
- Cant tolerate noise?
- Feel cut off?

These signs may range from mild to severe. They could signal potential mental health problems such as depression, anxiety or alcohol misuse. If any of these significantly affect your day-to-day life, you may need to take further action.

Getting help

It can be difficult and frightening to accept that there is something wrong. Its hard to take the first steps to seek help. If you think that you or someone you care about is not coping, it is important to talk with a professional you trust. Your local doctor is a good first point of call and can help you determine if there is a problem and what the best approach might be.

For advice, or to make an appointment you may also wish to call WVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service on 1800 011 046.

What works?

Some people experience a mental health problem only once and fully recover. Others may experience problems periodically at different stages of their lives. If you require help in dealing with your mental health problems, effective treatment is available. And most treatments are available in your local community.

Where to go for more information or help

- Talk to your doctor or health professional
- Call WVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service about counselling and their group programs on **1800 011 046**
- For more information call DVA on **133 254**
- Visit **www.dva.gov.au**

More information is also available at:

www.therightmix.gov.au

www.bluepages.anu.edu.au

www.beyondblue.org.au