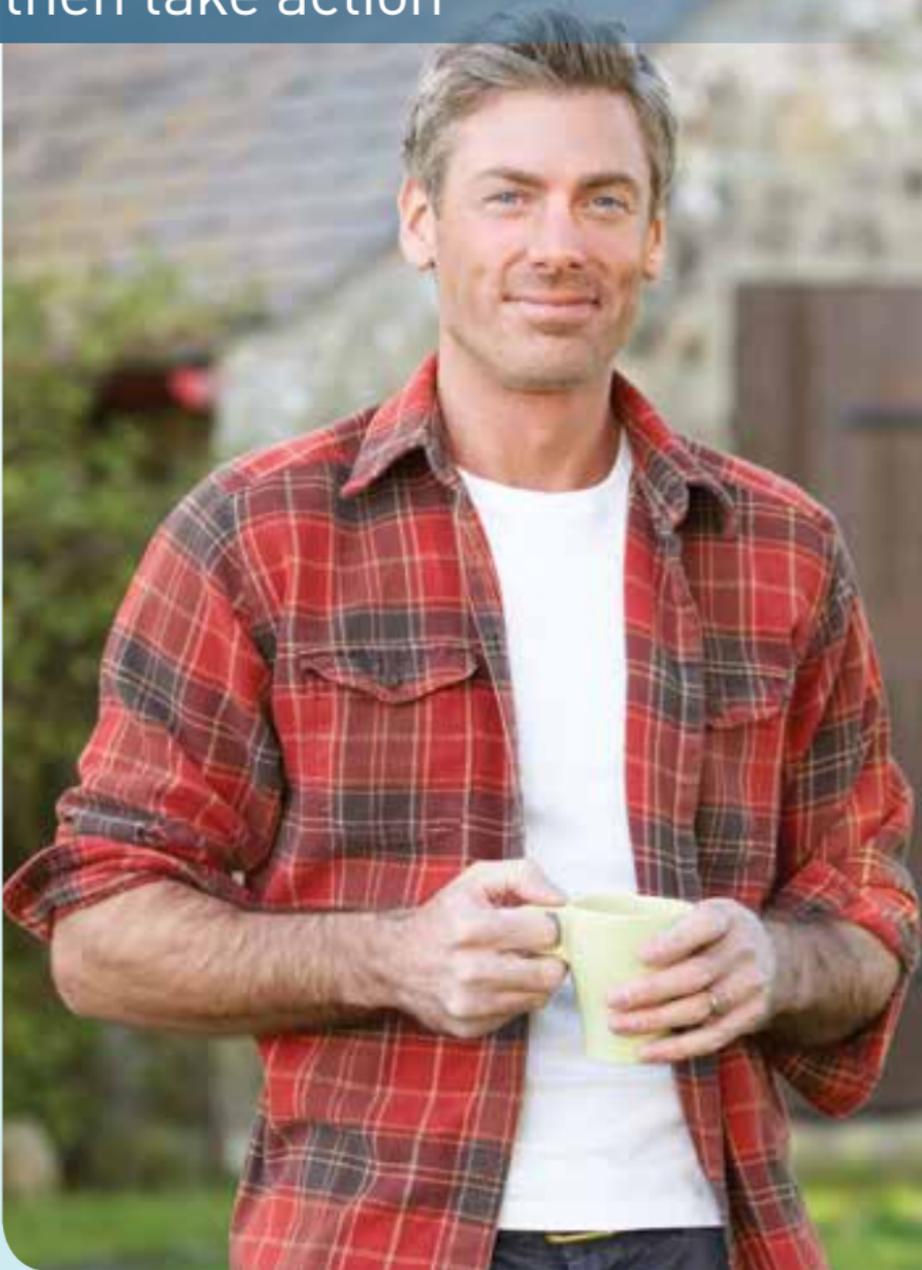




beyondblue
Depression. Anxiety.

Improve your understanding
of anxiety and depression,
then take action



In general, men tend to put off getting any kind of assistance because they think they are supposed to be tough, self-reliant, and able to manage pain and take charge of situations. This can make it hard for men to acknowledge they have any health problems, let alone one which affects their social and emotional wellbeing.

Depression is a serious and common condition which won't get better by itself. If you had a broken arm or a deep cut on your foot, you wouldn't expect that to heal without medical help. It's the same with depression.

On average, one in eight men will have depression and one in five men will experience anxiety at some stage of their lives.¹

While women are more likely to experience anxiety and depression, men are less likely to talk about it. This increases the risk of their anxiety or depression going unrecognised and untreated.

Untreated depression is a high risk factor for suicide and in Australia, there are approximately 2,200 suicides each year. Eighty per cent of people who take their lives are men – with an average of five men dying by suicide every day. Suicide is the leading cause of death for men under the age of 44, significantly exceeding the national road toll.²

It's important to remember that anxiety and depression are illnesses, not weaknesses, and effective treatments are available.



Have you caught up with Dr Brian Ironwood yet? On behalf of *beyondblue* Dr Brian hosts mantherapy.org.au, where he will guide you through activities to assess your wellbeing, offer answers to frequently asked questions and provide advice on how to take action to deal with depression and anxiety.

Man Therapy
mantherapy.org.au

Signs and symptoms

You need to know the signs – not only for you, but also for your mates and family.

Anxiety

Anxiety is more than having sweaty palms and butterflies in your stomach. Symptoms of anxiety can include feelings of worry, stress, fear and impending doom so severe they interfere with your ability to work, maintain relationships and get a decent night's sleep.

What to watch for:

Physical

- pounding heart
- excessive sweating
- choking sensations
- dizziness and vertigo
- shortness of breath
- hot flushes or chills
- insomnia and exhaustion
- panic attacks

Emotional

- feelings of dread
- concentration problems
- inner tension and nervousness
- catastrophic thinking
- irritability or edginess
- hyper vigilance toward danger
- absentmindedness
- fear of losing control

To find out more about anxiety and depression in men visit **www.beyondblue.org.au/men**

Depression

While depression is often associated with sadness and hopelessness, it often manifests itself in fits of rage, unnecessary risk taking, and alcohol or drug abuse in men.

What to watch for:

Physical

- persistent pain
- loss of energy
- loss of sex drive
- changes in appetite
- lethargy and/or exhaustion
- exhaustion
- change in sleep patterns and restlessness
- alcohol or drug abuse

Emotional

- feeling guilty
- feeling angry or violent
- losing interest in hobbies
- feeling apathetic
- feeling sad or nervous
- feeling alone
- taking unnecessary risks
- thinking about death or suicide



A handy place to meet

Men's sheds are a great place to get connected to other guys in your area. Unfortunately, not all of us have a men's shed nearby, so *beyondblue* has The Shed Online, a website where you can connect with over 10,000 other men. It's a safe and supportive space where men can feel confident to discuss and exchange information, as well as socialise, learn and share skills.

www.theshedonline.org.au

Seek support from your GP

Your doctor is a good source of information and can assess if what you are feeling is anxiety or depression. If you are diagnosed with either of these conditions, together you can work out an action plan.

Your action plan can cover a wide range of options. The plan can include exercise, stress management and how to improve your sleep. You may be referred to a psychologist who can help you to address things like negative thinking and how to deal with hassles in your relationships.

For some people, medication might also be necessary. Most people using medication report a significant improvement in their condition, and greater capacity to get back to the things they used to enjoy. Antidepressants take at least two weeks before they start to help, and it may also take some time for the doctor to find the medication and dose that is most effective for you.

There is a range of different health professionals who are able to provide advice or services if you're experiencing anxiety or depression.

Supporting yourself

You are in control of your health and wellbeing - there are lots of different things you can do so find an approach that best suits you. For example, try to stay active and make plans for the day - they don't have to be grand plans, just small things like going for a run, talking to a mate or doing some gardening. Try to include activities or hobbies that you specifically enjoy. At first, you may not enjoy them as much as you did before, but if you keep active and persist, the enjoyment should eventually return.

It's important to look after your body by staying physically active, eating healthily and getting plenty of sleep. Try not to drink or take drugs to block out how you're feeling and what is happening - this is not a positive long-term solution and only makes the anxiety or depression worse.

So, there is a range of options available, but it's different for everybody. The important thing is finding the right options and the right health professional that works for you.

Supporting others

How can I help someone with anxiety or depression?

It is helpful to:

- let them know if you've noticed a change in their behaviour
- spend time talking about their experiences and let them know that you're there to listen without being judgmental
- help them to get information from a website, library or community health centre
- suggest they go to a doctor or health professional, and help them to make an appointment
- offer to go with them to their appointment and/or follow them up afterwards
- encourage them to get enough sleep, exercise and to eat well
- encourage family and friends to invite them out and keep in touch, but don't pressure them to participate in activities
- encourage the person to face their fears with support from their doctor/psychologist
- discourage them from using alcohol or other drugs to try to feel better
- contact a doctor or hospital if they become a threat to themselves or others.

It is unhelpful to:

- put pressure on them by telling them to "snap out of it" or "get their act together"
- stay away or avoid them
- tell them they just need to stay busy or get out more
- pressure them to party more or wipe out how they're feeling with drugs and alcohol
- assume the problem will just go away.

If you or someone you know needs help, talk to a GP or other health professional about getting appropriate treatment.

Know the options and develop an action plan

Anxiety and depression are like any other medical condition – you need ways to manage them and stop them happening again later.

Some people think that it's weak to admit that they're going through a tough time, but if you have anxiety or depression, you can't just 'snap out of it' or 'pull yourself together'. There's more to it than that.

If you think you may have depression or anxiety, and want to take action, start by talking to someone you trust – keeping it to yourself only makes things worse. Discuss your situation with a mate, partner, family member or a colleague.

Take action and find out more. Visit www.beyondblue.org.au/taking-action

Stress

Stress is not the same as anxiety or depression – but for some people, being stressed for a long time can lead to anxiety and/or depression, plus it can affect a person's physical health, particularly cardiovascular health.

When we talk about being stressed, it usually means we're upset or tense about something that's happening in our lives.

Stress is a normal part of daily life. It's a natural physical and mental response that is designed to help people cope effectively with emergencies.

Some stress can be a good thing. It can help us get motivated to get things done, but health problems from stress happen when it is regular and doesn't let up.

References

- ¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics, *National Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing*, 2007, Catalogue Number 4326.0, 2008
- ² Australian Bureau of Statistics, *Causes of Death Australia 2011, preliminary data*, Catalogue Number 3303.0, 2013



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Where to find more information

beyondblue

www.beyondblue.org.au

Learn more about anxiety and depression, or talk it through with our support service.

 1300 22 4636

 Email or  chat to us online at
www.beyondblue.org.au/getsupport

mindhealthconnect

www.mindhealthconnect.org.au

Access to trusted, relevant mental health care services, online programs and resources.



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