

**1 in 4** OF US  
WILL EXPERIENCE  
**MENTAL HEALTH  
PROBLEMS**  
in our LIFETIMES.

# Mental Health

## Part 1 - Understanding and Acceptance

Mental illness has had a history that has brought forth images of horrid institutionalised treatments – one only has to recall such films and *One who Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* to the cost of not understanding the impact of Mental illness, in the film *Dead Poets Society*.

Mental illness can generate considerable concerns for those whom we love and care for – particularly for our children, spouses and close family members.

The impact of mental illness can vary within the clutter, activity and function of living.

The level of disruption to life is as diverse as the symptoms of any given mental illness. There are many functioning individuals who are able to live well with symptoms of a mental illness – disguising the symptoms, and finding ways to navigate around the symptoms that invade and erode the fullness of life.

There are however, other mental illnesses that can profoundly impose on the well-being of an individual, if left undiagnosed and treated.

As you read this introduction, you may be recalling personal experiences or thinking of someone you know who has had an episode or ongoing mental illness in life.

Mental illness is a threat to the wellness of family, relational and societal health.

The pursuit for Mental Health is the focus of individual, relational and community wellbeing.

This pursuit is everyone's responsibility.

It requires courage, involvement and commitment by all those involved in the process of acknowledgment, diagnosis and the treatment plan.

Without acknowledgement of mental illness – often measurable by such things as feelings of sadness, hopelessness, helplessness, stress, physical fatigue, unexplainable behaviours (with a pendulum swing from aggression to passiveness and withdrawal), conflict in relationships, increase in addictive behaviours (Eg. Drinking, social media, drugs, pornography) – the impact on the individual and others diminishes the recovery opportunity.

Mental illness requires a commitment of acknowledgement and acceptance that one is 'just not themselves' – whether this is conveyed by self-awareness or through the observations and feedback of trusted others.

**Definiton of Mental Health according to the  
World Health Organisation**



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Would you ignore physical changes in your body functions? Would you ignore unexplainable headaches, dizziness, bleeding, aches, pain, continual loss of balance, diminishing vision, hearing, and loss of taste, smell, wounds that will not heal or unexplainable growths? Most would not.

Mental illness can strike any individual due to unforeseen life experiences.

Just talk to a war veteran, a parent who has lost a child, a community who has experienced extreme poverty, natural disaster, and continual exposure to violence. Talk to a professional person, like a soldier, police officer, teacher, doctor, nurse, prison officers, doctors, dentists – just about anyone, who now can no longer attend to normal work duties or daily living events or chores.

They be your neighbour, previous work colleague, spouse, parent, partner, friend - or you.  
Mental illness is not to be feared. Mental illness is part of a vital organ's need for care.

Caring for our other vital organs – the heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, vascular and nervous system will make us pick up the telephone and make an appointment with a doctor – or someone will simply say “I’m making an appointment for you.”

The brain is a vital organ. In fact, the brain is the body's CEO ‘Critical Engineering Operator’ of our entire physical body.

If you have a concern for yourself or someone else, because you notice changes in well-being, management of stress and daily living, relationships, behaviour patterns or are hearing conversation that conveys struggle, continual worry, sadness, fear which is unexplainable or explained by a significant life event – you can do something.

## *Connecting to Help – Begin with your Doctor*

### Immediate concerns

- 000 (Ambulance and Police)
- Mental Health Triage (La Trobe Health) 1300 322 022 (24 Hours)
- Lifeline 13 11 14 (24 Hours)
- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636 (24 Hours)
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800 (24 hours)

### Services to East Gippsland

- CAMHS (Youth Mental Health) 1300 363 322
- BRHS – Hospital 5150 33 33
- SNAP (Mental Health Support Services) Rural: 1300 13 11 14 Bairnsdale: 5153 1823

You can also contact a member of Nagle's Counselling Team – Jo Aquila (Monday – Friday), Anne Daffy (Monday-Tuesday) or Terri McNeil (Wednesday – Thursday) on 5152 6122.