

Recognising that you may have a mental health problem and taking the first steps to get help can be difficult. Signs may include the inability to concentrate; being unable to engage with people; a change in appetite; feelings of worthlessness or hopelessness; change in sleeping patterns; and increased use of alcohol or drugs.

It may take time to begin to benefit from help but there are many effective treatments for mental health problems.

- Tell someone you trust
- Talk to your GP
- Specialist mental health services

### Tips for good mental well-being

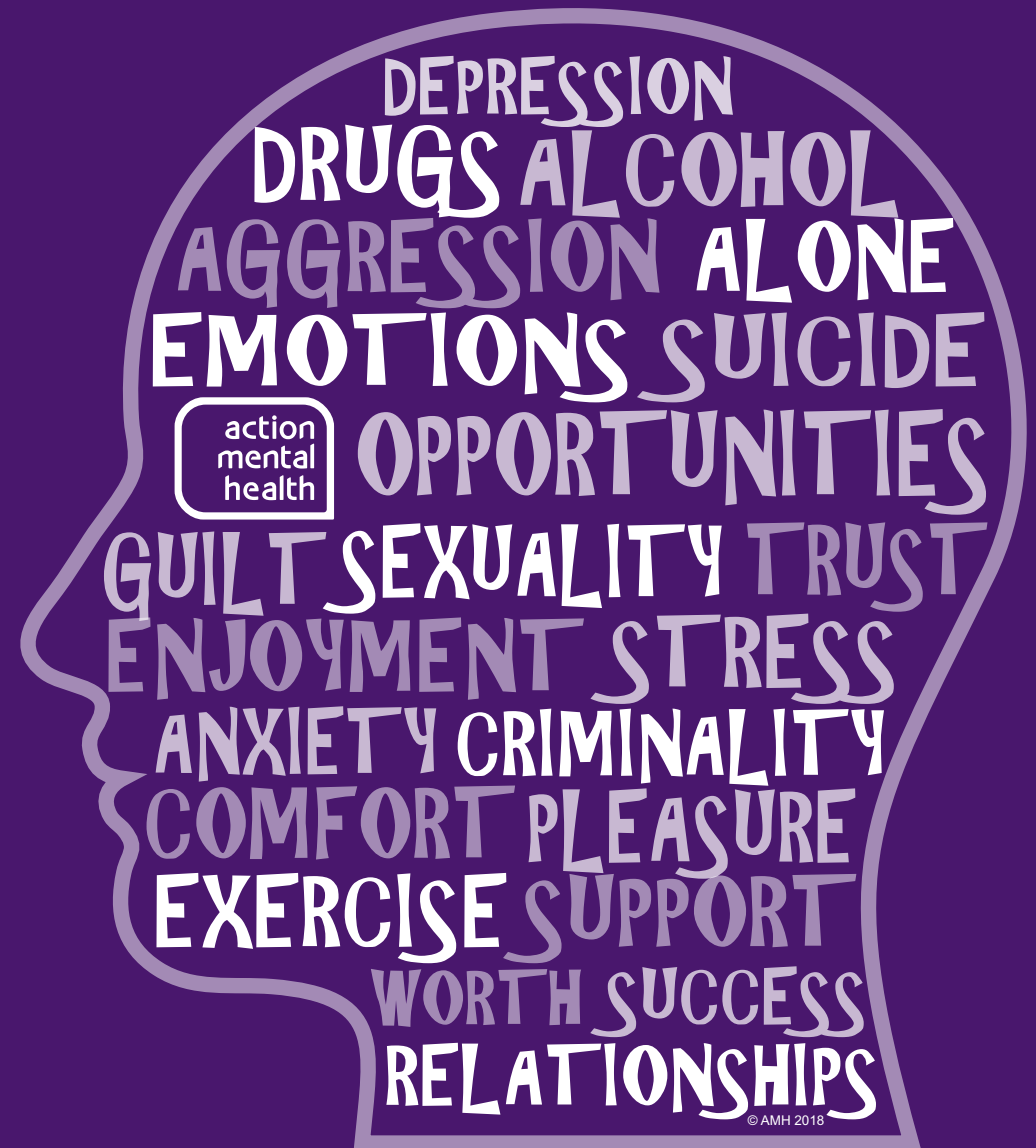
- Identify the causes and learn how to minimise and manage stress and anxiety
- Talk about feelings. Don't be afraid to admit something is wrong. Sharing these feelings can often help
- Know where help and support is available. Seek help from a GP or healthcare professional who can offer advice and will refer you on to a specialist for counselling if needed. In certain circumstances medication may also be considered
- Exercise regularly and eat a balanced diet. Minimise caffeine, drugs, cigarettes and alcohol
- Make time for sleep and relaxation

**Lifeline Helpline: 0808 808 8000**

Lifeline counsellors are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to listen and help, in confidence.

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# Men and Mental Health



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**Good mental health means feeling positive about yourself, being able to cope with everyday pressures and having the ability to form and maintain relationships with other people.**

**Looking after your mental health is just as important as looking after your physical health. In fact, poor mental health can lead to poor physical health.**

The same numbers of men and women experience mental health problems overall, but some problems are more common in women than men, and vice versa. It is recognised however, that men face particular barriers to getting help.

Men are known to *'self-stigmatise'* and many are embarrassed to admit to themselves or others that they have a mental health problem.

### **Depression**

Men often do not display the traditional symptoms of depression, more often associated with women, such as sleepless nights, crying and feeling low. Instead, they are more likely to 'act out', through taking drugs, drinking excessively or behaving aggressively. This means their problems can be overlooked or misdiagnosed.

### **Older Men**

Figures show that older men have the highest rates of suicide in the UK which experts have linked to depression, physical pain, illness, living alone and feelings of hopelessness and guilt. The fact that mental health concerns in many older men go undiagnosed is largely due to the fact that there is a lack of support services and resources that cater specifically for them.

### **Criminal Justice**

94% of young offenders are male and 80-90% are believed to have mental health problems.

### **Physical Factors**

Though we often associate mental health concerns solely with our emotions and what's going on in our minds there are various physical conditions which act as contributing factors towards mental illness. Research shows that men suffering from a long-term physical illness stand an increased risk of developing poor mental health.

### **Gay Men**

Homosexual men are likely to face various pressures throughout their lives as a result of their sexuality. Many will find it difficult to come to terms with their sexuality, others will feel isolated and may face negative attitudes and discrimination from society.

**REMEMBER: If you experience mental ill-health, you're not alone. One in five of us will experience some kind of mental health problem at some time in our life.**