

MENTAL WELLNESS

CLASS NOTES



**Mental Wellness in
lockdown and beyond**

INTRODUCTION



With Victoria seeing a 57% increase in teens being admitted to hospital for mental health in the past quarter, one in ten people across New South Wales being diagnosed with a new mental health issue in 2020 and over a third of Kiwis reporting moderate to severe psychological distress - our major member and industry groups are struggling. Our mental health is just as critical and should be provided as much priority as our physical health - health is health and we need to look after all aspect, mental and physical, of our health at all times.

Steven Gamble, Founder of Man Anchor, a grassroots mental health and well-being movement that provides mental health education workshops for businesses, schools, and community groups around Australia and hopefully when borders lift, across New Zealand, is a well-regarded expert across corporate mental wellness programs and provides guidance into how to approach mental wellness during lockdown and beyond.

SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE

In these unprecedented times it is completely understandable that some people within our community will be feeling levels of stress and low levels of anxiety. It is important that we address this before the stress and anxiety grows to distress or mental health crisis.

If you need any help contact:

Lifeline Australia on 13 11 14

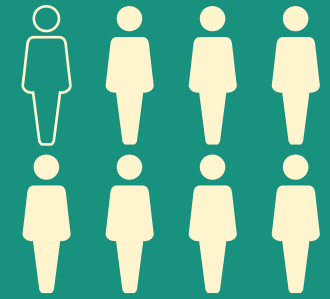
Lifeline New Zealand on 0800 543 354

THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

Australian Mental Health Stats



only 35% of people living with a mental health disorder seek professional support.



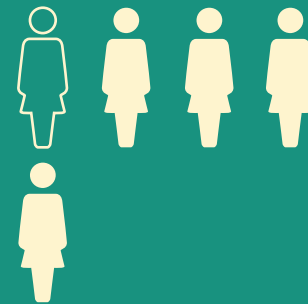
1 in 8 males will experience depression 1 in 5 males will experience anxiety (over a 12-month period).



1 in 5 Australians aged between 16-85 will experience a common mental illness in a 12 month period.



1 in 7 Australians aged between 12-17 will experience a common mental illness in a 12 month period.



1 in 5 females will experience depression 1 in 3 females will experience anxiety (over a 12-month period).



Suicide is the leading cause of death in males between the ages of 15 & 44.75% of all suicides are male. 3046 - 3318.

THE FACTS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES

New Zealand Mental Health Stats



In 2020, 654 Kiwis died by suicide.



Only 66% of men self-refer for mental health support in the workplace, compared to 74% of women in New Zealand.



1 in 4 Kiwis aged between 16-85 will experience a common mental illness in a 12 month period.

1 in 5 New Zealanders will experience mental illness in their lifetime. 1 in 7 will experience depression at some time in their life.



Across New Zealand, mental health services are sought by men (52%) and women (48%)



The Maori and Pacific Island suspected suicide rates are the highest at 20.24 and 7.07 respectively.

EMOTIONAL STATE



Crisis is any situation for which a person does not have adequate coping skills.

Therefore, crisis is self-defined.

What is a crisis for one person may not be a crisis for another person.

Crises may range from seemingly minor situations, such as missing the bus, to major life changes, such as death or divorce.

Crisis is environmentally based. What is now a crisis may not have been a crisis before or would not be a crisis in a different setting.

Sometimes coping strategies that are learnt in childhood are often not useful tools in adulthood e.g. self-blame, denial, shutting down

There are both adaptive coping strategies (improve functioning) and (maintain disorder) eg hyper-vigilance and obsessive worrying.

Clients may display maladaptive coping strategies e.g. venting, denial, anger

But, reinforcing the fact that they have called/walked-in to seek help is <https://www.mentalhelp.net>

Stress

A normal response to pressure and challenges. Not always a bad thing -
Positive Stress

Distress

Is a negative stress. Psychological distress that impacts your day to day living.

Crisis

A crisis is a unique response to an event. It is a situation for which a person does not have the adequate coping skills..

PREVENTION

When listening are we really listening with empathy or are we waiting to speak with judgement? Learning to listen with empathy is a skill we all work on each and every day. When listening to people who may be struggling it's important to remain open and encourage ourselves and those around us to take care of ourselves to prevent mental illness.

TIPS TO PREVENT MENTAL ILLNESS:

COMMUNICATION

Staying connected to others, having open and transparent conversations about mental health.

EXERCISE

It relieves tension and stress, boosts physical and mental energy and enhances wellbeing through the release of endorphins.

DIET

Eat a healthy balanced diet.
Limit alcohol intake.

LIMIT NEWS FEEDS

It's important to stay connected but be mindful that constant barrage of negative media can have a negative effect.

MINDFULNESS

Practicing meditation and breathing exercises combined with regular sleep.

The Power of Print 5

Working from home daily challenge

- 1 Communication: Take 5 minutes a day to connect with others.
- 2 Physical wellbeing: Keep moving stay active.
- 3 Take time to reflect and practice self-compassion.
- 4 Try a relaxation technique: Breathing and meditation "Stop & Re-set".
- 5 Improve your sleep.

SUPPORTING OTHERS



If you notice a friend, family member or colleague showing potential signs, they may be living with a mental health disorder, so it is important that we reach out to give support. Keeping in mind we do not need to have all the answers, we just need to be there to support the individual to find professional support.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS IDENTIFYING SOME OF THE MORE COMMON SIGNS.

BEHAVIORS

- > Withdrawn
- > Not able to complete tasks
- > Relying on alcohol or drugs
- > Lack of concentration
- > Abstaining from social events

FEELING

- > Overwhelmed
- > Guilty
- > Irritable
- > Frustrated
- > Low Confidence
- > Unhappy
- > Indecisive
- > Disappointed
- > Miserable
- > Sad

PHYSICAL

- > Tired all the time
- > Sick & run down
- > Headaches & Muscle pain
- > Churning stomach
- > Loss or change in appetite
- > Significant Weight loss or gain

Q & A

Q: Ruth, we often communicate directly with Business Owners. What are you seeing across this sector of our industry? Often managing all angles of this pandemic with businesses to run and responsibility across all sectors what have you seen and how can they also secure help?

Thanks Kellie. We work with business owners daily, and listening to the anxieties they have, they're the same anxieties, financial worries and protecting jobs for their staff at the other side of these lockdowns. We've got people working in a wide variety of ways now. Some are nervous about having to come to work and risking exposure or even infection, some working from home in situations that perhaps aren't ideal, some of us are at home and not working at all. Trying to manage all these different scenarios can be challenging for business owners. We try to advocate on their behalf, and some of the initiatives Rodney mentioned are fantastic, and we're seeing a lot of those things implemented here in NZ as well, buddy systems, communication programs and the like. We do have to remember that those business owners are people as well, they are just as likely to have anxieties and depression situations as their employees. Reaching out and checking in has proven valuable to these business owners. We're all people after all

Q: Rodney, you are in a seriously impacted NSW hotspot, how are your team? And would you be able to share some insights into the initiatives The Lamson Group has implemented across your teams during either last year or even move recently during Sydney's strictest lockdown period?

The first thing we've done is keep everyone employed, and this has largely been everyone's foremost concern. This has given the team confidence, knowing we're not going anywhere and will do whatever it takes to keep everyone employed. Flexible leave ensures that when staff are having leave, required or not, that they are spending that time with family, not alone. We've been flexible with all aspects of the business to ensure our staff's mental health was supported during leave. We've added administrative support, given the requirement to get a work permit every 14 days (given our location), make vaccination bookings, not everyone has internet at home, so this has helped many of our staff. Informal check-ins with staff as well as financial support, helping staff renegotiate their home loans, one staff member saved \$10,000, simply because the bank hadn't approached them. Cash-ins for leave for some staff that had partners that may have lost their jobs, this helped those that needed the cash, not the leave. We've also offered incentive for vaccination, we respect everyone's right, however, this helped across the business. Clear information regularly is vital, we've used QR codes to provide information that staff can read when it suits them on their phones. Keeping the consistency is the main thing, keeping things positive.

Q: Steve, there's two key groups across our sector, do we approach these groups differently in how we approach or provide assistance to employers and employees?

I think we have to recognise that we're all humans, we're all going to be vulnerable at some point, definitely, we're all exactly the same. If we look at it from a manager or employer point of view, coming to that person (an employee) with empathy and removing that hierarchy, approaching it from a human level, that's a really positive way to kick-start that conversation and providing that support. It's not about reprimanding or anything, approaching it as a colleague, that sets the conversation up and allows you to build a stronger, more supportive connection. Humans are humans, whether you're a business employer or employee, mother or father, whoever you are, reaching out or putting your hand up is critical for early prevention and nobody needs to hesitate in that regard.

ARE YOU LISTENING OR WAITING FOR YOUR TURN TO SPEAK?

Q: Wardy, you know I won't let you sit there quietly, you are heavily involved in mental well-being with mental fitness being a key focus of your work. How do you achieve this, what is your drive and where did that come from?

Steve touched on this a bit, mental fitness came about when we were trying to normalise mental health a bit. If we look at generations of the past, mental health was swept under the table, not talked about. Facilities like this webinar where we can join a conversation and a lot of the work Steve is doing in the industry have opened up those opportunities to talk. Mental fitness to us is about trying to change the vernacular, likened to physical fitness, if you hurt your hand or knee, you go and seek professional help. You're going to have your good days, and the not so good days. It's important to recognise that with our mental fitness. Seeking help is brave, and absolutely okay to do. For me, it started with my own challenges, I didn't seek help after I was made redundant and my wife was diagnosed with a serious, life-threatening illness. One of the things I could have done better, I was offered help, but as a typical bloke, I said "I'll be right, I don't need help". What comes along with that is a lot of negative connotations about white coats, doctors and psychologists. When we started 'Head above Water' as a fundraising group, we tried to change the perception of mental health into mental fitness. There is a lot of research that fitness, even as simple as a moderate walk and staying fit and healthy, can absolutely help with moderate depression. Keeping fit, staying fit, that's where that conversation around mental fitness came from.

Q & A

Q: Rodney, as an employer, what are the do's and don'ts when an employee comes to you with mental health concerns? Have you had to experience this yourself?

Yes, a few times to be honest. I think the first thing to remember is that you have a limitation on what you can do. Of course, a chat and a talk, encouraging that person to seek professional help and providing that flexibility and time to be able to do so. Regular check-ins to help that person through the process and also being vulnerable enough to share some of your own stories and life experiences. We've all lived through things in our lives and the people that have come to me, I've shared what I've been through in the past and how I got through it. Making sure they connect with the professional people that can help them out is probably most important. Providing support is number one, stepping through the human steps of it.

Q: How do we approach these conversations, when we recognise something in our colleagues, our staff, our home even, is there any specific language we should use and what if they don't really want our help, but we remain concerned?

First of all, you need to set it up right. The conversation is really important. Do you have the time to have that conversation right now? If not, can you put it off until you have the time to be present with that person? It might be, "Hey, I've got a meeting right now, but I do want to have the conversation

with you because I care about you, so, after my meeting, I can give you all my attention? Then make sure the place is confidential, and that it's safe. Some of the things we need to consider during that conversation: to stay calm, if the person is overwhelmed, let's bring it back down, let's monitor our time, be mindful of our body language, turn your computer off, step out from the desk, put the phone away, be present with that person. Don't be dismissive, that's not helpful, don't be judgemental, remove all judgement, especially when we're in a work point of view as well. Come with empathy, it's a vulnerable truce you can make with that person, it's about engaging with that person and their situation, if you can do that with one of your team, it's really powerful, they will feel heard. Making sure we give that person the time gives them the opportunity to contemplate what they are feeling. Give them the time, consider a smile, honour them. Listening is so important.

As a manager myself, with a team, as a father, as a partner, sometimes I've got to fix people's problems, however, sometimes I just need to sit back, and listen. There's a wonderful saying we use: Are you really listening, or are you waiting for your turn to speak? It's a wonderful mantra we can use in our lives to support colleagues, family, friends, our children. If we use that mantra, we can step back and really get an understanding and perspective on what might be going on for that person, and then we can ask them how we can support them. Health is health.

There is a lot of ways to keep mentally fit and remaining vigilant across the signs and symptoms for yourself and those around is important. Additionally, there is always support, via helplines, websites, your local GP, specialists and more. Never be too afraid to reach out and seek help, never be too afraid of asking someone if they are ok

TIPS TO KEEP YOURSELF ON THE GOOD SIDE OF THE MENTAL HEALTH SPECTRUM:

- > Get regular sleep
- > Regular exercise
- > Eat a healthy diet
- > Set yourself achievable goals
- > Keep in touch with friends and family
- > Do what makes you happy
- > Understand your own limitation
- > Control your work environment
- > Talk
- > Understand the signs
- > Seek help if you need it

THERE IS ALWAYS HELP

Australia

Lifeline
13 11 14

Domestic Violence
1800 RESPECT / 1800 737 732

Beyond Blue
1300 22 4636

New Zealand

Lifeline
0800 543 354

Suicide Crisis Line
0508 828 865

Online Resources

www.headtohealth.gov.au
www.depression.org.nz
www.mentemia.com
www.allright.org.nz
www.mananchor.com.au

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Steven Gamble

Man Anchor

Getting people to talk about their mental health is easier said than done. Steven Gamble from Man Anchor is here to change that. To start the conversation and empower us all to create positive change and a sustainable model to support the wellbeing of our friends, family and wider community.