

Mental Health General Information

Our mental health can vary according to our circumstances and can change across our lifetime, in the same way as our physical health does.

Anyone can develop a mental health problem, regardless of age, race, religion or gender.

The World Health Organisation defines health as:

"...a state of (complete) physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

Mental health influences how we think and feel about ourselves and others and how we interpret events. It affects our relationships, our capacity to learn, to communicate. It also influences our ability to cope with life events: having a baby, moving house, losing your job, experiencing bereavement, Christmas.

Poor mental health impacts on the ability of the population to obtain or remain in work. There were over 260,000 ESA claimants in 2011 that suffered from mental ill health.

Some Facts and figures around Mental Health in Wales:

- **1 in 4 of us** will experience some kind of mental health problem at some point in their lives;
- **1 in 6 of us** will be experiencing symptoms at any one time. At a time of recession, when levels of stress and anxiety inevitably rise, more people will be affected and suicide rates are likely to increase;
- **2 in 100** people will have a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder at any one time;
- **1 in 10** children between the ages of 5 and 16 have a mental health problem and many more have behavioural issues. There is evidence that this is increasing;
- **Approximately 50%** of people with enduring mental health problems will have symptoms by the time they are 14 and many at a much younger age, demonstrating that mental illness can affect people across the course of their lives;
- **Between 1 in 10 and 1 in 15** new mothers experience post-natal depression;
- **9 in 10 prisoners** have a diagnosable mental health and / or substance misuse problem.

(Source: Together for Mental Health: a Cross Government Strategy for Mental Health and wellbeing in Wales)

Stigma and Discrimination

Stigma around mental health often prevents people from accessing help and can hinder recovery. Ignoring a mental health problem can cause major changes. We believe that the lack of accurate information surrounding depression continues to prevent those affected from seeking and finding help when it is required.

No-one should fear depression; the vast majority of people affected will make a full recovery after appropriate treatment.

A new campaign in Wales . the **Time to Change Wales (TTCW)**

is the first national campaign whose aim is to end the stigma and discrimination faced by people with mental health problems.

The campaign is needed because although mental health problems are very common, it can still be a taboo subject. People who experience mental illness often face stigma and discrimination in the workplace, socially and within families. This can make life with a mental health problem more difficult than the symptoms themselves.

The campaign aims to improve knowledge and understanding about mental illness and, most importantly of all, get people talking about mental health.

Depression and Anxiety

Depression is a common mental disorder, characterised by sadness, loss of interest or pleasure, feelings of guilt or low self-worth, disturbed sleep or appetite, low energy and poor concentration.

Men and Depression

Overwhelmingly depression has been seen as a woman's problem, and the rate of depression among women is usually estimated as twice as that of men. However recent research has shown that men are actually just as likely to be depressed, if not more so. The difference is that depression symptoms in men and women differ and male depression tends to occur at a different stage of life.

Suicide

According to The Office for National Statistics (ONS), in 2011, the suicide rate was highest in middle-aged men (those in the 30 to 44-year-old and 45 to 59-year old age groups). In particular, the suicide rate in males aged 45 to 59 has increased significantly in the last five years to 22.2 deaths per 100,000 population.

Dementia and Alzheimer's

Some key facts regarding Dementia:

- Two thirds of people with Dementia are women;
- One in three people over the age of 65 will develop Dementia.
- The term Dementia describes a set of symptoms including memory loss, mood changes and problems with communicating and reasoning.
- Dementia is not part of growing old; it is caused by diseases of the brain, the most common being Alzheimer's.

In Wales, 44,598 people have Dementia; in the UK it is 800,000. The number of people with Dementia in the UK will double in the next 40 years. It is most common in older people but younger people can get it too.

(Source: Dementia 2013 . The hidden voice of loneliness. The Alzheimer's Society.)

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder, sometimes also known as manic depression - is a severe mental illness which effects 1 in every 100 during their lifetime. Bipolar disorder causes extreme shifts in a person's mood. People with bipolar disorder often have recurring episodes of mania and depression throughout their lives, although many are free of symptoms between these episodes.

Psychosis / Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a severe mental illness which affects about 1 in every 100 people during their lifetime.

Schizophrenia changes how the brain functions. The result is that a person's thought processes are distorted, altering their emotions, perceptions, beliefs and behaviour. Men and women are equally likely to be diagnosed with schizophrenia.

Cwm Taf's Early Intervention Psychosis Group -

<http://www.vamt.net/documents/whats-on/first-episode-psychosis-poster.pdf>

The Mental Health (Wales) Measure.

The Mental Health (Wales) Measure is a piece of law made by the National Assembly for Wales. The Measure introduced important changes to the support available for people with mental health problems in Wales. You can find more information on the Welsh Government's web page:

Self Help courses in Cwm Taf -

<http://www.interlinkrct.org.uk/2014/01/community-based-stress-control-and-mindfulness-courses-in-cwm-taf-january-may-2014/>

Cwm Taf have a range of community based self help courses available which are free and are being delivered in the local community.

The courses are Stress Control and Mindfulness.

- They aim to help people to better understand and manage their feelings and thereby improve their wellbeing;
- They are walk in / self referral;
- All adults are welcome, no one is expected to speak during the sessions and anyone attending is welcome to bring a friend.

For further information contact:

CTT_stresscontrol&mindfulness@wales.nhs.uk

Together for Mental Health – A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales.

In October 2012, the Welsh Government launched *Together for Mental Health . A Strategy for Mental Health and Wellbeing in Wales* an all age, cross-Governmental Strategy.

The 10 year Strategy is supported by an initial 3 year Deliver Plan.

The Strategy seeks to improve both the outcomes for users of mental health services, their carers and families, as well as the wellbeing and resilience of the wider population.

It is the first Strategy that covers people of all ages working towards a seamless transition between youth and adult services. It will also look at helping to tackle needs such as housing, debt, financial and social issues, all of which can impact on people's mental health and wellbeing.

Together for Mental Health, on a local level, is being delivered across Cwm Taf with the Local Health Board, RCT and Merthyr Tydfil Local Authorities, the Third Sector, Service Users, Carers and their families working in partnership. For information, advice and signposting to relevant services and organisations in the Borough

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