Can we talk?

MISSION AUSTRALIA

In association with Black Dog Institute

Seven year youth mental health report - 2012-2018

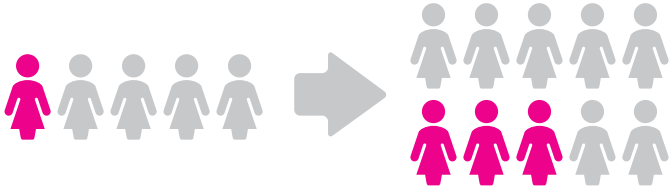
The prevalence of psychological distress has increased among young people over the past seven years, particularly among young females

Female vs male

Females are around twice as likely as males to experience psychological distress (30% compared with 16%)



The proportion of females with psychological distress has risen from over one in five (23%) in 2012 to three in ten (30%) in 2018



Rate of psychological distress

% of 15-19 year olds with psychological distress



Increased over seven years:

from 17% to 23% for 15 year olds and 18% to 27% for 18-19 year olds

Top concerns

Those with psychological distress* were more concerned about:

Mental health
63% compared with 21%

Coping with stress
74% compared with 34%

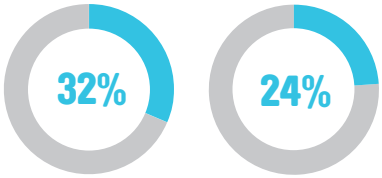
Body image
55% compared with 23%

School or study problems
55% compared with 27%

Suicide
36% compared with 9%

* Compared to young people without psychological distress

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander vs non-Indigenous



Nearly one third (32%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people surveyed experienced psychological distress compared with less than one quarter (24%) of non-Indigenous respondents

Control over life

Young people with psychological distress* are:

11x **more likely to feel they had *no control* over their life**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents with psychological distress# were:

3x **as likely to feel they had *no control* over their life** (27% compared with 9%)

Compared with non-Indigenous young people with psychological distress

Barriers to help-seeking

- **Stigma & embarrassment**
- **Fear**
- **Lack of support**
- **Lack of confidence**
- **Accessibility**

"People see asking for help as attention seeking"
Female, 16, NSW

"They feel they come across as weak if they ask for help"
Female, 16, Tas

"It's not cool to ask for help"
Female, 17, NSW

Young people with psychological distress are more than

5x

more likely to report that they experienced some stressful problems over the past year but did not get help, even when they thought they needed it (37% compared with 7%)

1 in 5

young people with psychological distress felt they didn't have someone they could turn to in a crisis

Key policy recommendations:

- Focus on prevention and early intervention including parenting interventions, school-based programs and programs delivered early in life to build resilience
- Resource schools to embed wellbeing personnel, train staff, implement evidence-based psychological programs, effectively respond to bullying and integrate wellbeing into the curriculum
- Equip young people's peers and parents with the knowledge and resources to recognise mental health issues and provide appropriate support and referrals when needed
- Improve access to health professionals for young people so they can receive early intervention in a youth-friendly environment
- Invest in researching, developing, implementing, marketing and evaluating evidence-based online therapies, courses, assessment tools and information aimed at young people in various formats
- Fund community-led programs that build on cultural determinants of social and emotional wellbeing to help provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people with protective factors against mental health difficulties
- Provide gender-sensitive mental health services to respond to the concerns and preferences of young males and young females
- Involve young people as co-designers of mental health and wellbeing services, programs and campaigns to ensure services effectively engage young people and promote help-seeking



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If you are a young person and need someone to talk with, you can contact Kids Helpline: 1800 55 1800 (24/7) kidshelpline.com.au

For more information: researchandpolicy@missionaustralia.com.au

To download the report: missionaustralia.com.au/youthmentalhealthreport