

Aged Care Diversity Framework

Resource Sheet 8 People with Mental Health Problems and Mental Illness

Almost half (45%) of the Australian population will experience a mental health condition sometime during their lives. Mental health conditions include depression, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and behavioural and psychological symptoms of depression (BPSD). Anxiety includes obsessive-compulsive disorder, post traumatic stress syndrome, panic disorder and phobias.

Of these anxiety and depression are the most common with approximately two million Australians experiencing anxiety each year and one million experiencing depression. Although these conditions do exist separately, over 50% of people with depression will also experience anxiety.

Older people are at risk due to the cumulative effect of multiple health problems, chronic illness and pain, medication side effects, loss and grief, social isolation and loneliness. It is estimated that at least 10% of older people will experience anxiety and 10–15% depression. People with dementia and carers can also be particularly prone to depression.

All Local Health Districts have Older Peoples' Mental Health (OPMH) Services, providing specialist mental health clinical care to people aged over 65, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50 and also people aged under 65 with age related conditions. OPMHs provide multidisciplinary community services and work in partnership with a wide range of providers.

Mental health treatment focuses on a recovery model of care, a strength-based approach that aims to build resilience and control over mental health challenges as well as to treat symptoms. The aim is to live a meaningful life. Wellness is central to this. The Commonwealth Department of Health's More Good Days Wellness Wheel is a useful model.

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The Wellness Wheel emphasises the importance of:

- mind wellness (e.g. how the person feels, their state of mind and mental stimulation)
- body wellness (e.g. diet, health lifestyle choices, physical activity and exercise)
- social connectiveness (e.g. family, friends, community, socialisation)

General Strategies to address access and engagement challenges

- Know, connect and partner with the local Older Peoples' Mental Health Services
- Partner with OPMHs and mental health professionals, supporting their focus on clinical recovery and providing supplementary wellness-focused community care and support
- Train key staff in Mental Health First Aid, a two-day accredited course
- Promote wellness planning as a routine part of care planning
- Support clients to stay well through reducing and managing stress; maintaining a healthy lifestyle through a nutritious diet, appropriate physical exercises and activities that stimulate and are enjoyable; and staying connected to others and their communities.

For further information,
see **Sheet 17: Resources**
– Resource No. 4, 7, 16, 17,
30, 33, 35