

Mental Health in New Zealand

- 47% of New Zealanders will experience a mental disorder such as depression, anxiety or an alcohol or drug addiction, at some time in their lives.
- One in five (20.7%) of those people surveyed have experienced a mild to moderate mental disorder in the last 12 months.
- According to the World Health Organization, mental illness accounts for 15 percent of the total burden of disease in the developed world, with depression set to become the second leading cause of disability in the world by 2020.
- Anxiety and depression are more common in women and substance abuse more common in men (double the rate of women).
- All disorders are common in 16 – 24 year olds and decline with age.
- People with a mental disorder are more likely to be physically unwell and the reverse is also true.
- Rates are higher for people who are disadvantaged, whether measured by educational qualification or household income. Maori and Pacific people have an excessive burden of lifetime mental disorder compared to other groups.
- Health Service Use:
 - Over a 12 month period only 39% of people with a mental disorder had visited health services.
 - People with lower educational attainment, those living in rural areas, Pacific people, males, and younger people were less likely to have had a health visit for a mental health reason.
 - The most common reason for delaying the seeking of treatment, stopping treatment or not seeking help were attitudinal: "I thought the problem would get better by itself".

Statistics are from Oakley Browne, M. A., Wells, J. E., & Scotts, K. M. (Eds). (2006). *Te Rau Hinengaro: The New Zealand Mental Health Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Health. Published in 2006 by the Ministry of Health, this research is based on interviews with 12,000 New Zealanders over the age of 16 years living in private dwellings, using an appropriate weighting for population of Pakeha, Maori and Pacific people.

Mental Health in New Zealand Workplaces

One in five New Zealanders are affected by mental illness every year, with one in three reporting days where they feel unable to work or carry out their usual activities because of problems with their mental health.

Between 10% and 30% of the New Zealand workforce is likely to be affected by mental health problems at any one time.

30% to 50% of work related stress can be directly attributed to bullying occurring within the workplace.

- Work related stress is a leading cause of poor mental health in often previously healthy working adults, contributing to high rates of depression and anxiety, staff turnover, absence from work, litigation, and overall poor performance.
- Feeling tired, worried, anxious, stresses or with disturbed sleep can all be indicators of poor mental health. This can reduce the ability of staff to concentrate on work tasks and production, increasing the likelihood of injury occurring.
- Depression, the most common serious mental health problem, is the leading source of employee disability in the world today.
- When harmful stress occurs in the workplace, it becomes an employment issue, which the employer and employee need to deal with. Amendments to the Health and Safety in Employment Act (1992) which came into effect in May 2003 specified mental harm as a workplace hazard that both employers and employees had a responsibility to manage.
- Helping workers cope with work stress or reducing work stress levels could prevent the occurrence of clinically significant depression and anxiety. Most depression can be treated successfully in cases that are accurately diagnosed.
- The mental health of today's workforce is one of the most valuable assets that a business can have in the competitive world in which we live and work.

Investing in a mentally healthy workplace will contribute to improved productivity, retention, recruitment, and engagement.

Information compiled by Health Action Trust, Nelson, 2010 from a variety of sources including:

- Allen, R. and Money, E. (2002). *Working well: A practical guide to building mentally healthy workplaces*. Auckland: Mental Health Foundation.
- Health and Safety Executive. *Management Standards for Tackling Work Related Stress*. Retrieved November 2009 from <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/standards/pdfs/suggestions.pdf>
- Melchior, M., Caspi, A., Milne, B., Danese, A., Poulton, R. & Moffitt, T. (2007). *Work stress precipitates depression and anxiety in young, working women and men*. Dunedin: University of Otago.
- Oakley Browne, M. A., Wells, J. E., & Scotts, K. M. (Eds). (2006). *Te Rau Hinengaro: The New Zealand Mental Health Survey*. Wellington: Ministry of Health.

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