

WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

*Do you think
you have mental
health problems?*

*If you do,
don't worry.*

It is normal for people to have problems, but sometimes these problems can seem to take over our lives. Some people will become very upset or sad because someone has died, lost their job, a relationship has ended or they are experiencing poor health. Other people will worry about problems at home such as money matters or problems with their children or spouse. Everyone responds differently to things that happen around them.

Sometimes our behaviour becomes uncharacteristic. Some of the ways we show that we are not coping very well can be spending too much time on our own, not sleeping properly, not wanting to go to school or work, developing different eating habits, feeling confused or feeling unaccountably angry.

These problems will usually sort themselves out over time, but you can speed up the process by:

- talking to friends and family about your problems;
- giving yourself some time out - give your brain a breather;
- looking after yourself - drink and smoke less, eat healthy food, get adequate sleep.
- talking to a counsellor, a doctor, your local community health centre or church adviser.

Sometimes people may experience more serious mental health problems; for example, 'nervous breakdown', depression, stress, anxiety, schizophrenia, bi-polar, personality disorders, obsessive compulsive disorders, post traumatic stress disorder, post and ante natal depression and dementia.

If you think you have a mental health problem you can get help from Community Mental Health Services. These services may include psychiatric hospitals, housing services and recovery support services.

So if you wish to discuss your problem and find out where local services are, you can do any of the following:

- Contact your local Mental Health Service or contact your local Public Hospital. For information about a range of mental health services, programs or support groups contact the Mental Health Foundation of Australia (Victoria) on the number below.
- Phone the Telephone Interpreter Service on: 131 450 (Nationally). This service can link you to an interpreter who speaks your language and can help you find your local community mental health service.
- Phone *Care Ring* - 136 169 and discuss your problem with the counsellor who answers the phone. If necessary the counsellor will provide the address of your nearest community health service.

MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION OF AUSTRALIA (VICTORIA)



270 Church Street Richmond 3121
Telephone: (03) 9427 0406
Fax: (03) 9427 1294
Email: mhfvic@pacific.net.au
www.mentalhealthvic.org.au

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

*Six ways
to keep
mentally
healthy.*

ONE

We all relax in different ways. Work out how you relax and do it regularly, not just when you need it. Remember that good sleep is very important.

TWO

Try to spend time with good company: friends, neighbours, family, work colleagues and school friends.

THREE

Spend time regularly with yourself, away from all demands. Look after yourself by thinking of things you might enjoy such as reading a book, taking a walk and listening to some music.

FOUR

Imagine some simple changes to your routines, which may increase your positive feelings. Get out of bed earlier, meet some new people or read a daily newspaper.

FIVE

If you are worrying about something, try to understand your thoughts and the reasons for them by writing the problem down and talking to someone about the problem.

SIX

Set some realistic goals for yourself and once achieved set new ones.