

World Mental Health Day 2018

The Mental Health Challenges faced by Women

What I plan to cover:

- A look at the statistics of women's mental health
 - Depression and what can help
 - Anxiety and what can help
 - Short relaxation exercise

Eating Disorders

1 in 50 women affected by
Anorexia and 1 in 100 Bulimia

Anxiety

1 in 3 women affected

Self Harm

1 in 12 young people
admit to self harming



Depression

1 in 4 women affected

Dementia

2/3 of sufferers female

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

Women twice as likely to develop PTSD
following a traumatic event.

Men's Mental Health

- Men more affected by substance misuse issues
- Less likely to seek help for mental health issues
- 75% of suicide victims in the UK are men.
- Suicide is the biggest killer of men under 45 years

CALM - Campaign Against Living Miserably - www.thecalmzone.net

UK charity working to prevent male suicide and remove the stigma associated with asking for help with mental health issues.

Depression

- **Low mood**
- **Low energy**
- **Changes to appetite** (increase or decrease)
- **Disturbed sleep**
- **Low energy**
- **Reduced motivation** – everyday tasks, such as attending to personal care needs, making a meal, shopping, etc. can become overwhelming
- **Thoughts of harming self, death and suicide**
- **Reduced ability to feel pleasure** – things that you previously enjoyed are no longer enjoyable.
- **Reduced sex drive or desire for intimacy**

What Helps

- **Breaking tasks down** to small, more manageable tasks
- **Recognising small successes**
- **Relaxation** – meditation, mindfulness activities, colouring in, stroking pets, warm bath, gentle music
- **Creative activities** – sometimes it's easier to express difficult feelings through art, poetry, writing, etc.
- **Distraction** – small, manageable, enjoyable activities that provide a focus and a sense of accomplishment

What Helps

- **Company of others and connecting** – low key activities can include visiting library, attending a group activity, seeing close friends/family
- **A physical health check to check** no underlying physical cause (e.g. underactive thyroid, vitamin D deficiency)
- **Medication** – should be a joint decision you make with your doctor
- **Talking therapies** – Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Psychotherapy, etc.
- **Complimentary therapies** – massage, aromatherapy, Reiki, Accupuncture
- **Exercise** – yoga, pilates, swimming, gardening, dog-walking, dancing
- **Daylight** – some find light therapy helpful, lightboxes need to be 10,000 lux

Anxiety

Physical symptoms

Difficulty falling/staying asleep

Headaches

Dry mouth

Shortness of breath

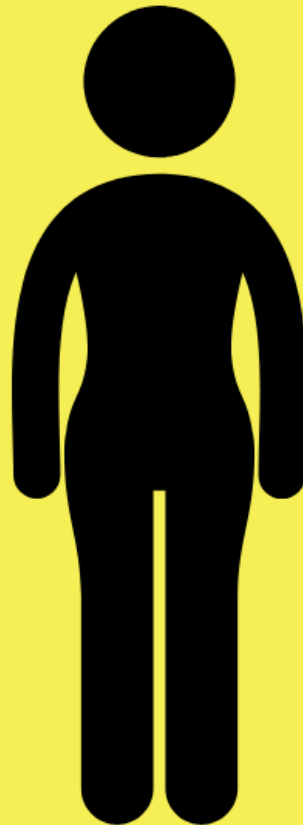
Muscle tension

Reduced sex drive

Upset stomach

Tiredness

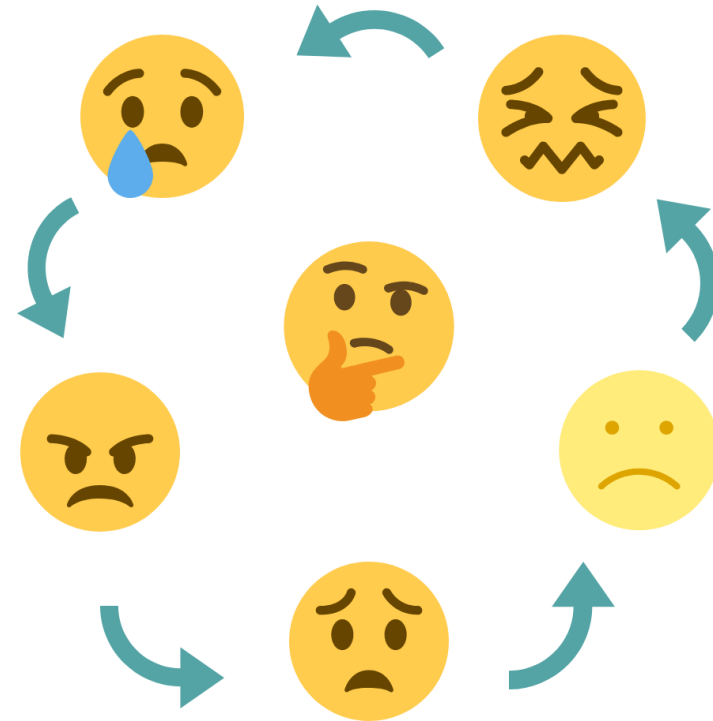
Shaking



Anxiety

Psychological symptoms

- Tearful and sensitive
- Poor concentration
- Feeling of dread
- Restless
- On edge
- Irritable



What Helps

- **Talking therapies** – e.g. cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- **Meditation and Mindfulness exercises**
- **Reducing stimulants** – caffeine, nicotine, sugar
- **Creative hobbies** – provide outlet for emotions, zentangles, colouring
- **Keeping thought records** – helps to identify feelings, triggers and reflect and evaluate whether fears are realistic and reframe situations.
- **Pets** – stroking a pet can help slow breathing and provide comfort

What helps

- **Exercise** – Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, Swimming, Gardening
- **Complimentary therapies** – massage, acupuncture, aromatherapy
- **Social contact** – chatting with friends, family, etc.
- **Medication** – speak to GP
- **Music** – singing can help regulate breathing and provide outlet for emotions
- **Taking time out** – as little as 10 minutes break from a stressful activity can bring down anxiety levels

Relaxation



References

- General overview - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/w/women-and-mental-health>
- Eating disorders figures - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/a-to-z/e/eating-disorders>
- PTSD figures - <https://patient.info/health/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-leaflet>
- Self harm figures - <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/health/physical-and-mental-health/adults-reporting-suicidal-thoughts-attempts-and-self-harm/latest>
- Anxiety figures - <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/get-help/anxiety-information/frequently-asked-questions/>
- General overview of UK population - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/statistics-and-facts-about-mental-health/how-common-are-mental-health-problems/>
- Young women's hospital admissions due to self harm doubles in past 20 years - <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/aug/06/hospital-admissions-for-teenage-girls-who-self-harm-nearly-double>