

## Factsheet 02

# Understanding Mental Health



### Warning

Some information on this page may be difficult to read or may cause strong or upsetting feelings. Please only carry on reading if you feel safe to do so.

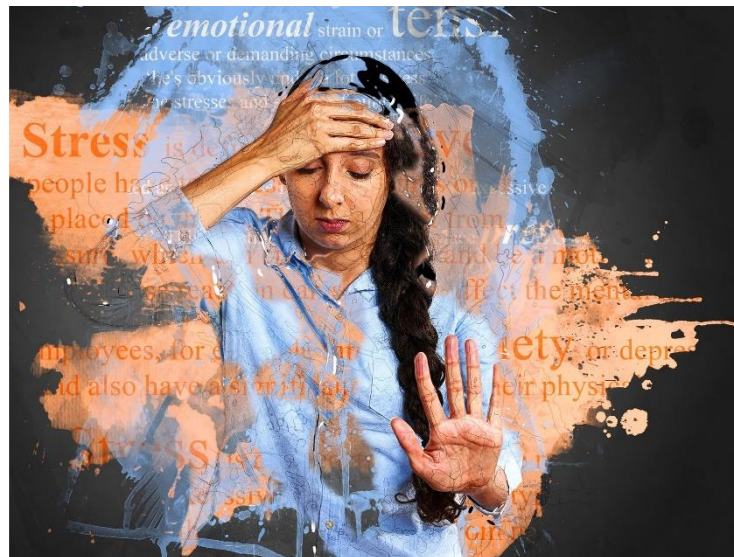
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### Remember

**Mental Health Conditions  
doesn't discriminate.**

**They can happen to  
anyone,  
anywhere, anytime.**

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### What is Mental Health?

A state of mental wellbeing which helps individuals to cope with the stresses of life (World Health Organisation. 2022).

Mental health Conditions involve significant disturbances of thinking, emotional regulation and behaviour (World Health Organisation 2022).



## The 5 most common mental health conditions are:

- Anxiety.
- Depression.
- Bipolar.
- Schizophrenia.
- Eating Disorders.

## How many people does it affect?

- 970 million people of the world's population have a mental health condition or substance misuse disorder. That is 1 in 8 people worldwide.
- If you have a disability, you are 10 times more likely to have a mental health condition.
- More women have a mental health condition with 11.9% worldwide compared with 9.3% of men affected.
- In the UK, 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health condition. With 1 in 6 accessing support for their condition.
- 20% of 8- to 16-year-olds in the UK have some kind of mental health condition in 2023.
- 23% of 17-19 year olds in the UK have a mental health condition.



## Self-Harm

Although self-harm IS NOT a mental health condition in itself, it can be part of other mental health conditions, as a means of relief and escape.

- Characterised by behaviours such as cutting, burning, scratching, or doing things to the body to cause pain, this could also include self-neglect.
- Young people are the group most likely to self-harm.
- 17% of people, and 5% of the adult population, have self-harmed in their life.
- 50% of people who self-harm will seek support, but usually from a friend or family member rather than a medical professional. So, learning to talk openly and honestly and have these conversations is important.

*(Hull, M. The Recovery Village. 2024).*

## Developing a safety Plan

A safety plan can be used if a person is experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harming behaviours to try and keep them safe.

### The Safety Plan should include the following:

- Some self-soothing exercises (these are things that make you feel good or calm).
- A safe place to go.
- A safe person, or people, to speak to.
- Information about the kinds of triggering situations or behaviours that impact the individual.
- Phone numbers of relevant medical professionals.
- Phone numbers for organisations that can provide support for example, the Samaritans (116 123) or shout.



## Resources

There are many charities and organisations who have an array of resources to support you and offer guidance:

- Young Minds  
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/responding-to-self-harm/>
- Mind  
<https://www.mind.org.uk/for-young-people/feelings-and-experiences/coping-with-self-harm/>
- Papyrus  
<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/self-harm/>

### SUPPORT AND EMERGENCY CONTACTS

If you feel overwhelmed, or like you want to hurt yourself or someone else, you can:

Text SHOUT to 85258 to contact Shout's textline

Call HOPELINEUK on 0800 068 4141 or the NHS on 111 and select option 2

Contact Childline by using 1-2-1 chat or calling 0800 1111

If you feel like you may try to attempt suicide, or you or someone else is seriously hurt, this is an emergency. You should:

Call 999 and ask for an ambulance.

Tell an adult you trust and ask them to call 999 for help.



## The Mind App Library

This is a resource where you can find other helpful apps that have been checked by the charity Mind, for their appropriateness. It covers a huge range of different conditions, including mental and physical health.

<https://mind.orchhealth.com/en-GB/topic/all-mind-approved-apps?&sortBy=AccreditationScoreDesc>

You can also check out our factsheet 01, All About Anxiety which contains useful information and techniques to try to help when negative thoughts and anxiety disrupt your life.

<https://www.alstrom.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Factsheet-01-All-About-Anxiety.pdf>

## We are here for you.

Alström Syndrome UK offer a wellbeing service for those diagnosed with Alström Syndrome and their families.

Please feel free to get in touch with our Wellbeing Coordinator, Melissa Crowland who can discuss ways she can support you on your journey.

**Email:** Melissa on [melissa.crowland@alstrom.org.uk](mailto:melissa.crowland@alstrom.org.uk)

**Telephone:** Melissa on 07301078059

Please note that Melissa works part-time on a Wednesday and Friday.

