

Nine tell-tale signs of mental health issues

One in five Australians is affected by a mental health issue. It often takes someone close to them to spot differences in their behaviour and realise that something is wrong. However, with an overwhelming amount of information and advice out there, it is hard to be sure and even harder to work out how best to support your friend or family member.

The team behind the mindhealthconnect.org.au website has identified nine early warning signs that can help you spot if someone close to you might have a mental health issue. The signs include: feeling worried or anxious, feeling depressed or unhappy, emotional outbursts, sleep problems, appetite or weight changes, being quiet or withdrawn, substance abuse, frequent self-criticism, and significant changes in behaviour or thinking.

Dr Nick O'Connor, Clinical Director, North Shore Ryde Mental Health Service and spokesperson for Healthdirect Australia, said: "From time to time we all get stressed, emotional, have problems sleeping or a change of appetite and these can be completely appropriate and natural responses to what's going on in our lives. But if such feelings or behaviours become part of someone's everyday experience then it can be a sign of a developing mental health issue".

"Despite being very common, mental health issues are something that many people overlook – attributing the symptoms to other aspects of life such as work pressures, tiredness or money troubles. The changes in your feelings and behaviours are gradual and easy to miss" added Dr O'Connor, "Quite often, your responses become disproportionate or outlive the initial problem."

"It can take someone close to notice the tell-tale signs of a mental health issue and that's where a resource like the *mindhealthconnect* website proves valuable. If you think someone close to you may have a mental health issue the website can help by pointing you in the right direction of credible information and support."

The *mindhealthconnect* website is government funded and allows you to complete a simple search, taking you to the most relevant and trusted information and support from some of Australia's leading health organisations including [beyondblue](#), [headspace](#) and the [Black Dog Institute](#).

Through *mindhealthconnect* you can access a range of mental health resources including online programs, eTherapy, fact sheets, audio and video, and online communities provided by the site's trusted content partners.

Dr O'Connor said: "Not only does *mindhealthconnect* provide direction on where to go for trusted information, the website also contains sections on common mental health issues and tips for improving wellbeing. It should be the first step for any Australian who wants to help someone close to them with a mental health issue."

The *mindhealthconnect* service is a national initiative operated by Healthdirect Australia, on behalf of the Australian Government. Healthdirect Australia is a publicly funded, COAG (Council of Australian Governments) company responsible for identifying, procuring and contract managing publically funded telephone and online health information and advice services including *mindhealthconnect*.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Contact: Ben Taptiklis email ben.taptiklis@healthdirect.gov.au or call on 0439 900426

- **mindhealthconnect**

An online mental health portal providing access to trusted, high quality programs, services and information to support a healthy mind. The website provides access to a range of trusted mental health resources from Australia's leading health organisations. mindhealthconnect is a national initiative operated by [Healthdirect Australia](#), on behalf of the Australian Government.

Visit: www.mindhealthconnect.org.au

- **What information is available on mindhealthconnect?**

Visitors can access a range of online programs, fact sheets, audio and video and online support groups provided by our trusted content partners.

The website provides a [Guided Search Tool](#) that assists people in finding the relevant mental health resources specific for their needs.

The website also contains information on [improving your wellbeing](#), [setting goals](#) and achieving a good [work/life balance](#).

- **Who can use mindhealthconnect?**

mindhealthconnect provides access to online mental health resources for Australians who are concerned about their own or someone else's mental health. This information is available to different age groups, life stages and cultural backgrounds. Health professionals can use mindhealthconnect as an additional resource for patients in their care.

- **Who has contributed information to the website?**

The resources on mindhealthconnect are provided through partnerships with leading health organisations in Australia. Healthdirect Australia has partnered with over 25 organisations to provide trusted content for mindhealthconnect. These organisations include Mindspot, Sane Australia, Lifeline, Mental Health Online, beyondblue and headspace. All content within or accessed via our website are subject to quality assessments and reviews as part of Healthdirect Australia's clinical governance framework.