



Teenagers & Young Adults

Warning signs, information and support

**Incidence of mental health
problems amongst young
people in Ireland**

‘1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem at some point in their lives’

World Health Organisation

The Mental Health of Young People in Ireland

Royal College of Surgeons Ireland

- Two studies

 - The Adolescent Brain Development Study

 - The Challenging Times Two Study

- Representative sample

11-13 year olds

- 1 in 6 (15.4%) were experiencing a mental disorder at the time of the study
- Anxiety disorders and behavioural disorders followed by mood disorders
- Just under 1 in 3 (31.2%) had experienced a mental disorder at one point in their life.
- Anxiety disorders followed by behavioural disorders
- 1 in 10 (10.2%) had experienced two lifetime disorders
- Almost 1 in 20 (4.7%) had experienced 3 or more types of disorders over the course of their lives

19-24 year olds

- 19.5%, almost 1 in 5 were experiencing a mental health disorder
- Anxiety disorders most common followed by mood disorders
- Findings suggested that 1 in 2 will have experienced some form of mental disorder over the course of their lives with 56% meeting the lifetime criteria for any mental disorder
- Mood disorders emerged as the most prevalent lifetime disorder followed by anxiety disorders
- 1 in 4 (25.4%) had experienced more than 1 disorder over the course of their lifetime

Warning Signs for Mental Health Problems

Would you know how to spot
signs that someone is in
distress?

Warning Signs of Mental ill health for Young People

- **Mood Changes:** Look for feelings of sadness or withdrawal that last for at least 2 weeks or severe mood swing
- **Intense Feelings:** Be aware of feelings of overwhelming fear for no reason- sometimes with a racing heart or fast breathing or worries or fears intense enough to interfere with daily activities

Warning Signs of Mental Ill health in Young People

- **Behaviour Changes:** Drastic change in behaviour or personality as well as dangerous out-of-control behaviour. Fighting frequently.
- **Difficulty Concentrating:** Look for signs of trouble focusing or sitting still
- **Unexplained weight loss/ gain**

Warning Signs of Mental Ill health in Young People

- **Physical harm:** including suicidal thoughts or actual attempts at self harm or suicide
- **Substance abuse:** Use of substances to try to cope with their feelings

Anxiety Disorders

- **Emotional Changes**
- Persistent worrying & excessive fears
- Increased irritability
- **Cognitive Changes**
- Difficulty concentrating & paying attention
- Easily distracted
- **Physical Changes**
- Poor sleep
- Somatic/ body complaints
- **Behavioural changes**
- Avoidance of feared situations
- Social isolation or being withdrawn
- Excessive shyness
- Inability to relax
- Problems with work/ school, social or family life

Warning Signs for Teen Depression

(St Patrick's Hospital)

- Sadness and despair
- Poor sense of self and self-belief
- Anger and irritability
- Tearfulness and crying
- Social withdrawal & loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Changes in eating and sleeping patterns
- Excessively harsh view of them selves
- Agitation or lack of motivation / boredom
- Poor energy and concentration
- Self-harm or Suicidal ideation

Teenage Angst vs. Mental Health Problem

- Consider severity and duration of symptoms
- Interference with normal activities and hobbies
- Dramatic Changes in behaviour and personality

Transitions & Young People

Transitions & Young People

‘ As children and young people move through the various transitions that accompany adolescence- physical, emotional, hormonal, sexual, social, intellectual – the pressures and problems they encounter can all too easily seem overwhelming. For many young people these and other pressures can lead to one or more of a variety of mental disorders’

Examples of Transitions

- Changing friends
- Changing schools
- Bereavement
- Separation from family
- First exam
- First sexual experience
- Moving away from home..

**How to support / intervene
with someone in distress?**

- Equipped with information on warning signs and transition points, would you know how to approach a young person you feel is in difficulty?
- What would be your concerns?

What can we do to support young people?

- Realise that mental health problems are treatable
- Don't be afraid to intervene
- Don't presume someone else will intervene
- Ensure young people know that you are there to support them – One Good Adult
- Remember that you don't need to be an expert or a miracle worker

Steps to Take When you Notice Someone is Experiencing Mental Distress

Notice

- Notice the warning signs of mental health problems. The signs usually aren't once off occurrences, they persist over several weeks

Talk

- If see notice the warning signs, talk to the young person. Ask how s/he is doing, say you are concerned, be compassionate as you listen and respond

Share

- Make sure to share what you've seen and heard with someone who can help the young person get help e.g. parents

What can your club do?

- **Develop guidelines** for identifying, intervening and supporting a young person in mental distress including details on crisis situations
- **Disseminate guidelines** to club members, players, parents etc
- **Provide training** to staff and volunteers where appropriate e.g. Mental health first aid, ASIST, SafeTalk

What can your club do?

- **Promote Positive mental health and Sigma Reduction Campaigns** e.g. HSE Little Things Campaign, Green Ribbon campaign etc
- **Encourage a positive help seeking environment**
- **Disseminate information on where to go for help** e.g. Mental health directories, HeadsUp Text service (Freetext Headsup to 50424)