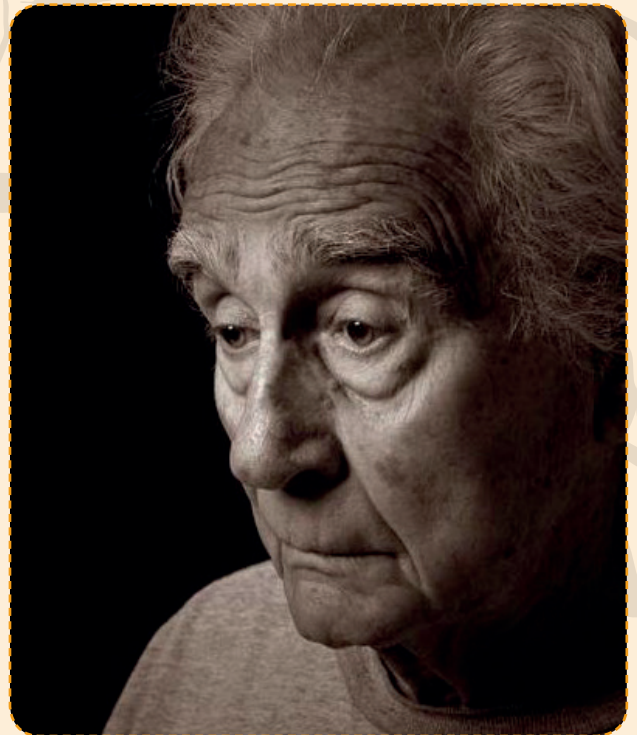


LGBTI people in Australia

Australia is becoming more inclusive of LGBTI people. However, being LGBTI comes with its own specific challenges. Fears of criminal persecution had a significant impact until laws were repealed just over 30 years ago. Research suggests that LGBTI people have increased risk of depression and anxiety. LGBTI people may have resilience and strength of spirit, however discrimination at any point in a person's life, whether past or present, can still impact upon their mood, health and wellbeing.

Challenges for Older LGBTI people

- Past rejection by family of origin and friends resulting in isolation and loneliness
- Unresolved loss and grief related to loss of contact with partners/family/friends
- Change of financial or living circumstances
- Managing drugs, alcohol and prescription medications
- Self-harm and suicidal ideation as a consequence of psychological distress related to the above



Symptoms of anxiety

Anxiety can come up in different ways for different people. Some people are anxious about or avoid social situations, some experience excessive and uncontrollable worries, panic attacks or specific fears (e.g. heights). Others have problems being in places that make them uncomfortable, or problems being separated from certain people they love.

Some symptoms that you may experience when anxious include:

- Finding it difficult to concentrate and stop worrying
- Avoiding certain activities
- Feeling unsafe
- Phobias that may make you significantly distressed (e.g. fears of heights, spiders, air travel, having injections, or visiting the dentist).
- You may feel easily tired, restless, irritable or frustrated
- You may experience headaches, muscle pain, changes in appetite or weight, tiredness and difficulty sleeping

Strategies that can help

- Accessing peer and professional support or counselling when it's needed
- Experiencing affirming, supportive and ongoing relationships with family and friends
- Developing and maintaining friendships with other LGBTI people, including peers that you can talk to and connect with.
- See your doctor or GP to see if there are any actions you can take to help support you.

Symptoms of depression

Some symptoms that you may experience with depression include:

- Low mood
- No longer enjoying things you used to
- Sleep problems
- Big changes in appetite or your weight
- Finding it hard to concentrate or make decisions
- Finding it hard to function in regular social situations
- Feeling overwhelmed with emotions.

Treatments for depression and anxiety

People experiencing emotional distress can find it difficult to seek and get the help they need. This can be even more challenging for LGBTI community members if they cannot access mental health services that are able to respond in socially and culturally competent ways.

- Visiting a GP is a good first step in getting help. GP's can assist by assessing you for depression and anxiety using a specific set of tools developed to make an initial assessment. They can draw up a mental health care plan which will enable you to access support through Medicare.
- You can also present yourself (that is, self-refer) to a social worker, counsellor, psychologist or clinical psychologist
- If you or someone you know is having thoughts about suicide, there are crisis numbers you can call, you can contact your local public hospital by telephone or you can present to the emergency department of your local public hospital.



Who can you call?

ACON offers face to face counselling as well as alcohol and other drugs specialists

Sydney

Call the Intake Officer:
(02) 9206 2000

Free Call: 1800 063 060

Hearing Impaired: (02)
9283 2088

Email: intake@acon.org.au

www.acon.org.au

Hunter Region

Call: (02) 4962 7700

Email: hunter@acon.org.au

Northern Rivers

Call: (02) 6622 1555

Free call: 1800 633 637

Email: northernrivers@acon.org.au

For a list of GPs and mental health professionals with expertise in depression and anxiety visit

beyondblue.org.au
1300 22 4636.

Lifeline

13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service

1300 659 467

Carers Australia

1800 242 636

MensLine Australia

1300 78 99 78

Relationships Australia

1300 364 277

QLife

1800 184 527

NSW Alcohol and Drug Information Service

(02) 9361 8000 or

1800 422 599 (rural)

Moodgym

moodgym.anu.edu.au

Suicide Prevention

Australia

suicidepreventionaust.org

The LOVE Project is an ACON initiative aimed at creating better conversations and improved social engagement with older LGBTI community members. By understanding people's needs and preferences the LOVE project aims to facilitate greater social connectivity, improve social inclusion and provide appropriate health information for LGBTI elders.

facebook.com/LivingOlderVisiblyEngaged | twitter.com/LOVEproject | Loveproject.org.au

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