

Research report



This is a research report by the **National Centre of Excellence in Intellectual Disability Health**.

We call it the **Centre** for short.



A **research report** is a document that explains

- What the research is about
- What we did
- Why the research is important
- What we found out
- What needs to change



What our research is about

Our research is about **mental illness** and people with intellectual disability



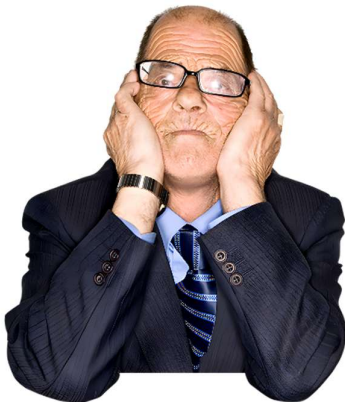
Mental illness effects how a person

- thinks
- feels
- behaves

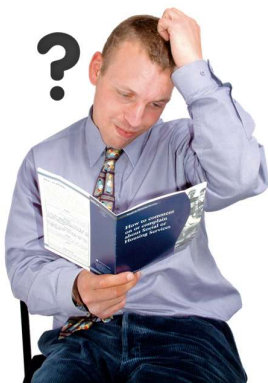


Mental illness can make people feel

- sad



- worried



- confused



Sometimes mental illness makes it hard
for people to do things like

- go to work or school



- look after themselves



- have good relationships with other people



When this happens, it is called **serious mental illness**.



People with intellectual disability are more likely to have mental illness and serious mental illness than people without intellectual disability.



We wanted to find out what situations and conditions make it more likely for people with intellectual disability to develop:

1. Mental illness

and

2. Serious mental illness.

Why this research is important



Many people with intellectual disability do not get the right help for their mental illness or serious mental illness.



The information in our research can

- help health services give better support sooner
- tell governments and health services who needs the most help

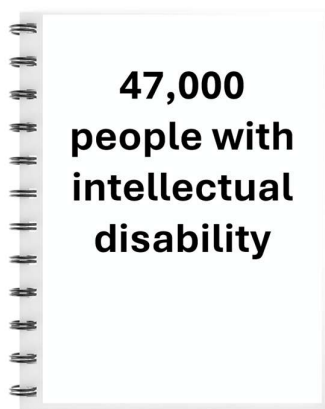


Australian Government



- make sure health services can help people with mental illness or serious mental illness stay healthy.

What we did



We looked at over 47 thousand health and medical records about people who

- have intellectual disability



- were between 13 and 80 years old



- were in New South Wales between 2004 and 2018.

What we found out



About 1 in 2 people with intellectual disability had mental illness.



About 1 in 8 people with intellectual disability had serious mental illness.



People with Down syndrome and cerebral palsy were less likely to have mental illness or serious mental illness.



There were situations and conditions that made it more likely for someone with intellectual disability to have **mental illness**.

1. Having **ADHD** or learning disorders meant people with intellectual disability were more likely to develop mental illness.

ADHD stands for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder



2. Living in areas with less money or fewer opportunities meant people with intellectual disability were more likely to develop mental illness.



3. Having physical health problems meant people with intellectual disability were more likely to develop mental illness.



There were situations and conditions that made it more likely for someone with intellectual disability to have **serious mental illness**.

1. Having ADHD or learning disorders meant people with intellectual disability were more likely to develop serious mental illness.
2. Living in areas with less money or fewer opportunities meant people with intellectual disability were more likely to develop serious mental illness.





3. Living in rural or remote areas meant people with intellectual disability were more likely to develop serious mental illness.



4. Being a man meant people with intellectual disability were more likely to develop serious mental illness.



5. Having mental illness in the past meant people with intellectual disability were more likely to develop serious mental illness.

What needs to change



Health services need to identify mental health problems early and give support before they become serious.



Health services should be easier to access for people who live in rural or remote areas.



Health workers should get training about mental health and people with intellectual disability.



Health services need to work better together.

Doctors, psychologists and disability workers should plan care together.



If you are having trouble with mental illness, please contact support services.

You can call Lifeline on 13 11 14.