

October 10, 2019

Managing anxiety starts with knowing the signs

People experiencing anxiety conditions sometimes don't seek support because they think their symptoms aren't serious enough, or because they don't believe they have an issue, a new Beyond Blue survey has found.

The survey of 1449 people found that two out of five people who checked their symptoms using an anxiety screening checklist had experienced mild to severe anxiety in the previous two weeks. Of those, fewer than half – just 46 per cent – reported having sought professional support.

Anxiety conditions are the most common mental health issues in Australia, affecting two million people. On average, it can take more than eight years for people with anxiety issues to seek support.

“Anxiety can take many forms and it's important to understand that with the right support, recovery is possible and these issues can be managed,” **Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman** said.

“Most people who responded to our survey recognise that, yet many remain reluctant to seek support. We wanted to understand why.

“People told us they thought their issues weren't serious enough to warrant treatment, and some did not think that what they were experiencing may, in fact, be an anxiety condition.

“We all experience feelings of anxiety from time to time – it's a normal reaction to the stress we encounter every day – but if your anxious feelings occur frequently, are intense or long lasting, or if they're interfering with your life, it may be a sign of an anxiety condition and you may benefit from more support.”

The Beyond Blue survey findings inform its national anxiety campaign – a three-year push to improve community understanding of anxiety and its symptoms, and to encourage support seeking.

Three quarters of people surveyed said their anxiety condition had at times stopped them from living life the way they wanted to. Respondents said they had not sought support because they:

- Thought what they were experiencing wasn't serious enough (31 per cent);
- Thought they could solve the problem on their own (29 per cent);
- Didn't think they had a problem (20 per cent);
- Didn't seek help because of a dislike of discussing feelings, emotions and thoughts (20 per cent).

Ms Harman said support for anxiety came in many forms and even simple interventions could help.

“Some people might benefit from visiting their GP or psychologist but for others, non-clinical options can be useful,” she said.

“Beyond Blue offers online [forums](#) where people can share their experience and learn from others who are managing similar issues. Our [Personal best](#) website provides tips and strategies for looking after your mental health. And our [NewAccess](#) program, a mental health coaching service, gives people free advice about ways to handle low to moderate anxiety and depression.

Contact: Beyond Blue
Dominic Ciconte (03) 9810 6184 / 0499 800 096
dominic.ciconte@beyondblue.org.au

Beyond Blue
PO Box 6100 Hawthorn West VIC 3122
Beyond Blue Support Service 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au

“No matter how serious your anxiety issue, support is available and the right advice can support you to manage it.”

The first step towards managing anxiety is learning to spot its signs and symptoms. People can also use an [anxiety screening checklist](#), available free on the Beyond Blue website.

Some common signs of anxiety include:

- Excessive worrying about things that could go wrong
- Racing mind that won't calm down
- Feeling tense or on edge
- A racing heart
- And sleeping problems

Mental health professionals are available at the Beyond Blue Support Service via phone 24/7 on 1300 22 4636 or via [beyondblue.org.au/get-support](https://www.beyondblue.org.au/get-support) for online chat (3PM – 12AM AEST or email responses within 24 hours).

Contact: Beyond Blue
Dominic Ciconte (03) 9810 6184 /0499 800 096
dominic.ciconte@beyondblue.org.au

Beyond Blue
PO Box 6100 Hawthorn West VIC 3122
Beyond Blue Support Service 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au