National
Disability
Data Asset

Mental health services for people with disability

What we learned from our early research

December 2021

Easy Read report

How to use this report

The National Disability Data Asset Team wrote this report. When you see the word 'we', it means the National Disability Data Asset Team.

We wrote this report in an easy to read way.

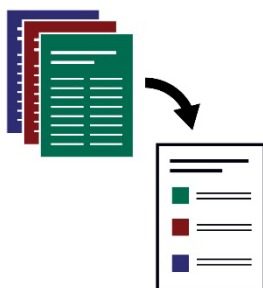We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Not bold

Bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.

We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 15.

This Easy Read report is a summary of another report.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.

You can ask for help to read this report. A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.

In this report, we talk about some things that might upset some people.

If you get upset and need support, you can contact Lifeline.

13 11 14

www.lifeline.org.au/

You can also contact Beyond Blue for support.

1300 22 4636

www.beyondblue.org.au

What's in this report?

What is this report about?

We know people with disability cannot always find and use health care services.

This includes **mental health services**.

Mental health services support people with their mental health problems.

A mental health service can be an:

- organisation

- individual.

We also know people with disability are more likely to have mental health problems than other people.

We know mental health services in Victoria do not link well with other supports.

This includes:

- supports for people with disability

- housing and social services people in the community can use.

We know people with disability face challenges when they move between services for:

- mental health

- disability.

We did some research in Victoria about:

- people with disability

- their experiences with mental health services.
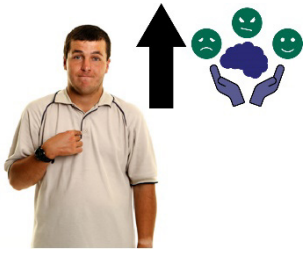
We need to understand:

- what people with disability need from mental health services
- how people with disability use mental health services.

This can help make mental health services better for people with disability.

What did we learn from our early research?

Using mental health services

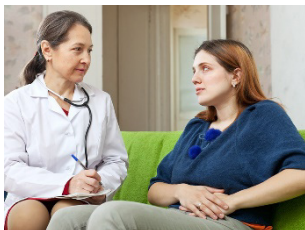We learned people with disability are more likely than other people to use mental health services.

Around 9 in 10 people with disability used mental health services from 2008 to 2018.

Around 4 in 5 of these people with disability had support from the government to use:

- mental health services from their doctor

- medicine they needed for mental health problems.

Who used mental health services?

From 2008 to 2018, lots of people with different disabilities used mental health services.

1/3

Around 1 in 3 people who used mental health services had a disability that affects how they:

- move
- use their body.

3/10

Around 3 in 10 people who used mental health services had a **psychosocial disability**.
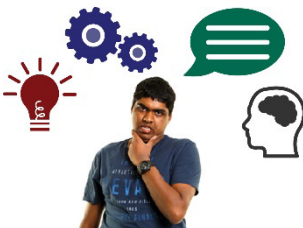
A psychosocial disability comes from a person's mental health problems.

2/10

Around 2 in 10 people who used mental health services had an **intellectual disability**.

An intellectual disability affects how well someone can:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.

1/10

Around 1 in 10 people who used mental health services had a disability that affects how they:

- see
- hear.

2/100

Around 2 in 100 people who used mental health services had a **brain injury**.

A brain injury can happen when someone:

- has a bad accident
- hurts their head badly
- damages their brain.

Disability and health data

When we talk about **data**, we mean:

- facts

- information

- records.

We learned if we link disability and health data, we will know more about:

- people with disability

- their health

- their mental health problems.

We will also know more about how well services support people with mental health problems.

The **National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)** is a way to support people with disability around Australia.

This part of our research focused on how many people with disability who took part in the NDIS:
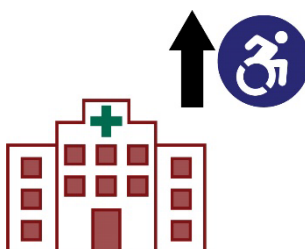
- passed away

- hurt themselves because they have mental health problems.

This is the first time we have had this type of data.

We learned how many people with disability pass away.

We also learned that more people with disability go to hospital because they hurt themselves more than other people.

What does our early research mean?

In Victoria there are many people with disability who also need mental health services.

This means people with mental health problems might not get:

- the support they need
- any support at all.

People with disability who have mental health problems face more challenges if they move between:

- disability services
- health care services.

We must do more work on how disability and health services can:

- get data about people with disability
- share that data.

This will help us understand:

- how people with disability use mental health services

- what people with disability want for their health

- how we can make health services better for people with disability.

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.

Brain injury

A brain injury can happen when someone:

- has a bad accident
- hurts their head badly
- damages their brain.

Data

When we talk about data, we mean:

- facts
- information
- records.

Intellectual disability

An intellectual disability affects how well someone can:

- learn new things
- solve problems
- communicate
- do things on your own.

Mental health service

Mental health services support people with their mental health problems.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The NDIS is a way to support people with disability around Australia.

Psychosocial disability

A psychosocial disability comes from a person's mental health issues.

Contact us

If you have trouble hearing or speaking, you can contact the National Relay Service.

133 677

www.relayservice.gov.au

You can also contact the Department of Social Services (DSS) for more information.

NDDA@dss.gov.au

GPO Box 9820

Canberra ACT 2601

www.dss.gov.au/ndda

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