

# Mental Health & Sexual Health

Solent Mind



# Mental and Sexual Health – The Links

- **Stigma:** Mental health and sexual health can be difficult to talk about, and judgements still exist in relation to both.
- **Prevention:** Education and understanding are fundamental to preventing mental and sexual health issues
- **Early Intervention:** Early intervention in a mental or sexual health issue makes the most significant effect on long term outcomes
- **Everybody's business:** We all have mental and sexual health

# Mental Health and Contraception

Studies suggest links between mental health and contraceptive non use, misuse and discontinuation:

- Decision-making and cognitive processes impacted by mental health issues can affect risk assessment and perceptions of susceptibility.
- Motivation and self-care can be affected by poor mental health, which can in turn impact reliability of contraceptive use.
- Mood symptoms of contraception and anxieties about side effect can increase risk of discontinuation.

# Common risk factors – Mental Health & Sexually Transmitted Diseases

There are multiple common factors that are known to increase the risk of mental health issues and the risk of contracting STDs:

- Age
- Alcohol
- Poverty
- Drug use

# Common Risk Factors – Mental Health & Teenage Pregnancy

There are multiple common factors that put young people at an increased risk of a mental health issue and of teenage pregnancy:

- Poverty
- Poor health
- Alcohol and/or substance misuse – young person or parents
- Experience of abuse
- Family history
- Looked after children/care leavers
- Long standing education difficulties or disengagement

# Common Risks

In both mental and sexual health, experiencing multiple risk factors increases the risk further.

We also know that these risks and their potential outcomes affect one another, for example:

- New mothers who have an unplanned pregnancy are 4 times more likely to experience postnatal depression.
- Young men with a history of depression and anxiety are more likely to become teenage fathers.
- The risk of death for people with a dual diagnosis of schizophrenia and HIV is up to 26 times higher than those with only one or neither of these conditions.

# Mitigating the risks

There are a range of positive methods and approaches that we can all use to mitigate these increased risks:

- **Open conversations** – reducing stigma through open and honest conversations, centred on the individual.
- **Shared learning and approaches between different services** – working together to provide more rounded and consistent support and information.
- **Supporting informed decision making** – encouraging consideration of factors linked to discontinuation and being open about potential challenges so that we don't 'set people up to fail' - eg daily pill taking requires motivation and diligence which can be adversely affected by issues such as depression.

- **Supporting informed decision making** – enable consideration of the mental health impacts of contraceptive options, and vice versa. Pay genuine attention to concerns and honest about impacts and outcomes of different decisions.
- **Taking a strength-based approach** – Take a ‘person first’ approach that supports people to recognise what they can do and what they want, and work from there.
- **Be realistic** – acknowledge difficulties faced and encourage people to think about these can be tackled, changed or avoided.
- **No ‘one size fits all’** - Know what other support is out there and support people to access it.



# Supporting the conversation

## **Best Day-Worst Day:**

Encourage people to think about their best day and worst day in relation to their mental health – would the option they are considering work on both? Would either day need a plan B?

## **Adapt, Action or Abort:**

If something is particularly triggering or affecting mental health encourage the person to think about whether they can adapt the thing, take an action to mitigate the negative effect, or not do the thing.

## **A Friend in Need:**

When mental health and decision making is impacted by low self worth or issues with self care, it can be helpful to encourage people to think about what they would advise a friend or someone they care about to do in a similar situation. What outcome would they want for the friend? How would they help them achieve it?

# Solent Mind

- We provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem
- We're part of a network of 140 local minds, in England and Wales which are independent charities. We have our own board of trustees, and raise our own funds. We tailor our support to the needs of people living in Hampshire.
- We provide a range of different services across the Hampshire region.

# Solent Mind Services

**Advocacy:** Our advocates work with people in their local communities and in hospital settings.

**Peer Support:** We have a range of projects led by and for people with a mental health issue, including open access community programmes for people aged 16+.

**Talking Therapies:** Our iTalk service offers therapies to people aged 16+ in the Hampshire area (excluding Southampton and Portsmouth)

**Wellbeing:** Our wellbeing centres across the region offer a range of programmes to improve and support mental health.

# Solent Mind Services

**Children & Young people:** We work with schools and colleges to offer mental health education and support. We also work one to one with children and parents in the Fareham area.

**Dementia support:** We support people with dementia and their families through our Remind and Forget me Not projects in Portsmouth and Southampton.

**Portsmouth Support & Recovery Service:** We offer a personalised range of support, advice and practical assistance.

**Horticultural therapy:** Our Mayfield nursery in Southampton supports people to improve their wellbeing through horticulture.

# Accessing Solent Mind

- The vast majority of our services are accessible through self-referral and are free to access.
- Our Peer Support and iTalk services are for anyone aged 16+
- Our Heads Up service works with schools and colleges for all ages from Reception year to university
- Our Upturn project in Fareham provides individual support for young people aged 14-21.
- Our wellbeing service is able to support young people aged 17 who are in the process of transitioning to adult support services
- All of our other services are for people aged 18+

**Accessing Solent Mind**

**[www.solentmind.org.uk](http://www.solentmind.org.uk)**

**[Info@solentmind.org.uk](mailto:Info@solentmind.org.uk)**

**Tel: 02382 027810**

We're Solent Mind, the leading mental health charity across Hampshire. We're here to make sure anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn to for advice and support. We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health issue has support and respect.

