

WELLBEING

# Mental Health Awareness Week

## 13<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2019



According to the World Health Organization (WHO), roughly 450 million people currently suffer from mental health conditions, placing mental disorders among the leading causes of ill-health and disability worldwide.

13th - 19th May is Mental Health Awareness Week. The awareness campaign is organised by the Mental Health Foundation (MHF) and it's main focus is to help raise awareness of mental health and wellbeing every year.

### Body image

This year, the campaign's theme addresses body image and how it affects people across a lifetime, ranging from children and young people, to adults and people later in life.

In 2018, the MHF found that 30% of all adults have felt so stressed by body image and appearance that they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope. That translates to almost 1 in every 3 people.

There are many reasons as to why so many of us are concerned about our body image. A survey carried out by Dove found that 6 in 10 women living in the UK believe that social media pressures people to look a certain way. And in addition to this, 7 in 10 women believe that current media and advertising set an unrealistic standard of beauty.

### Symptoms of poor mental health

If you are worried about your own mental health, or the wellbeing of someone you care about, it is important to look out for emotional warning signs.

Mental health problems can cause a wide variety of emotional symptoms, some of which include:

- Changes in mood
- Erratic thinking
- Chronic anxiety
- Lack of self-worth
- Impulsive actions

### Mental health top tips:

**Talk** - It's vital for your own mental wellbeing that you open up to your support network and talk about your thoughts and feelings.

**Exercise** - Regular exercise can boost your self-esteem, help you become more productive and improve your sleeping patterns.

**Eat well** - A balanced diet that is good for your physical wellbeing, is also good for your mental wellbeing. Your brain needs a mix of nutrients to stay healthy and function well.

**Drink less** - Stay within the recommended daily alcohol limits; 3 to 4 units a day for men and 2 to 3 units a day for women.

**Be mindful of others** - Caring for others is often integral in maintaining relationships with people you care about. It can also help to put our own problems into perspective.

### How do I get involved?

**Social media** - This year, the MHF are encouraging you to #BeBodyKind. To

take part, simply post on social media an image of a time when you felt comfortable in your own skin. It could be a picture of yourself or of an object that reminds you of that time. Don't forget to use the hashtags #BeBodyKind and #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek.

**Green ribbon** - The green ribbon is the international symbol for mental health awareness. Join thousands of people across the UK who will be wearing a green ribbon for Mental Health Awareness Week and all year round.

**Host an event** - There are plenty of events that you can host to help raise awareness of Mental Health Awareness Week. Popular events include:

- **Tea & Talk:** Have a meaningful chat with a colleague over a cuppa.
- **Bake off:** Put your co-worker's baking skills to the test and help raise funds for a mental health charity of your choice.
- **Curry & Chaat:** Chat with your friends, family or colleagues over a hot curry and strengthen your relationships in the process. [Click here](#) for more information.

If you feel as though you are concerned with your mental health, or if you have any other wellbeing concerns, please call our helpline on: **0800 030 5182**

Or alternatively, visit our portal to view advice articles, webinars and 4-week programmes all aimed at improving your physical and mental wellbeing. [www.healthassuredeap.com](http://www.healthassuredeap.com)

TOPICAL

# Sun Awareness Week 6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019



According to **Cancer Research UK**, melanoma skin cancer incidence rates in the UK are projected to rise by 7% by 2035.

Sun Awareness Week is a wellbeing event organised by the British Association of Dermatologists (BAD). The campaign is overseen by the BAD Skin Cancer Prevention Committee, comprised of leading medical professionals with expertise in skin cancer, vitamin D and public health messaging.

The awareness event aims to provide the public with information on both skin cancer prevention - encouraging people to regularly self-examine for skin cancer. And detection - teaching people about the dangers of sunburn and excessive tanning.

### What causes skin cancer?

Too much ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun or sunbeds is the main cause of skin cancer. In the UK, almost 9 in 10 cases of melanoma (the most serious type of skin cancer) could be prevented by taking the correct precautions and enjoying the sun safely, as well as avoiding the use of sunbeds altogether.

### Types of UV rays:

There are 2 main types of UV rays that damage our skin. Both can cause skin cancer:

**UVA** - penetrates deep into the skin. It ages the skin, but contributes much less towards sunburn. UVA rays are the ones that are used in tanning beds.

**UVB** - affects the top layer of skin and is responsible for the majority of sunburns. UVB rays can burn unprotected skin in just 15 minutes.

### Sun protection tips

We all need exposure to the sun. When we do so, our bodies make vitamin D, which helps the body absorb calcium for stronger, healthier bones. There are also many positive effects that sun exposure can have on our mental health, as it can alleviate the symptoms of depression, as well as simply boosting our overall mood.

However, it is well known that too much exposure to the sun can cause lasting damage to our skin. Below, we have listed five sun protection tips to help you and your family stay safe in the sunshine this summer:

**Sunscreen** - The most common and easily accessible method to prevent sun damage to your skin is sunscreen. Make sure that you purchase a good quality sunscreen that protects you from both UVA and UVB radiation, and has a minimum SPF of 30. If you know you will be encountering water, ensure that your sunscreen is water resistant.

**Apply it properly** - You should make sure that you apply the sunscreen at least 30 minutes before you go outside. This will allow your skin to fully absorb the lotion. Reapply sunscreen to your exposed skin every two hours.

**Sunglasses** - **Research** has found that 5-10% of skin cancers occur on the eyelid. When buying sunglasses, look out for indicators of high quality and safe glasses such as the 'CE Mark', UV 400 label, or

'100% UV protection' written on the label or sticker.

**Correct clothing** - Darker clothes with tightly woven fabric will give you more protection from the sun. Look for clothing with an Ultraviolet Protection Factor (UPF) on the label. A UPF of 40 or higher means that your clothes will absorb or reflect at least 97% of UV light.

**Hydration** - Being dehydrated may not be as visible as sunburn, but it can be just as dangerous. If you are exposed to a hot climate, you are at a greater risk of becoming dehydrated and developing heat stroke. Avoid this by drinking at least 2 litres of water a day and try not to consume alcohol or caffeine.

By following our tips above, you will be safe in the knowledge that you are doing your best in protecting yourself and your family from harmful amounts of UVA and UVB radiation.

Remember, sun damage is cumulative - it builds up over time, particularly if you've had multiple severe sunburns. Damaging your skin now can possibly lead to health risks later in life.

If you feel as though you are concerned with your exposure to the sun, or if you have any other wellbeing concerns, please call our helpline on:

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## LEGAL

# LGBT Rights and Progression – A Legal Focus



Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) social movements are types of group action that advocate for LGBT people in society.

LGBT rights first came into prominence in the United Kingdom following the decriminalisation of sexual activity between men in England and Wales in 1967. Scotland followed suit with the decriminalisation of sexual activity between men in 1980 and then Northern Ireland in 1982. Interestingly, sexual activity between two women has never been a criminal offence.

Under the Buggery Act 1533, gay and bisexual men could face a maximum sentence of life in prison. The text of the Act described 'buggery' as a 'detestable and abominable vice'. The first individual to be prosecuted under the Act was Walter Hungerford, a Baron born in 1503. Walter was beheaded on 28th of July 1540 at Tower Hill in London, a place where high profile individuals were taken to be executed.

London's first Pride parade was held in 1972, with around 1,000 members of the LGBT community in attendance. At the time, this was seen to be an enormous amount of individuals - it is important to remember that in 1972 it was nowhere near as common to express your sexual orientation if it deviated from what was known as the social 'norm'. The individuals marching

for their rights were determined to make themselves visible whilst demanding LGBT liberation.

During this time, it was clear that although the law had changed to accept gay relationships, society was proving slow to catch up. In a vast comparison and perhaps a clear indicator of social shift in attitude toward the LGBT community, around 1 million people descended on London in 2018 in order to participate in London Pride.

In 1988, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher amended the Local Government Act 1988 to include a clause, now infamously known as 'Clause 28', effectively barring state schools from encouraging or teaching the 'acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship'. Clause 28 was seen to be a catalyst for a surge in widespread gay activism having left the LGBT community and its allies outraged. In 2003 the government backed a successful attempt to repeal the 'unnecessary and undesirable measure'. Clause 28 was repealed in Scottish law in 2000, and Northern Irish law in 2003.

In terms of the rate of legislative change, it appears that once LGBT rights became a recognised mainstream concern, new bills were passed with quick succession. The new legislation made some important and positive changes, including allowing gay people to adopt children and join the Army.

Encouragement of homophobic hatred

was criminalised in 2008, whilst same sex marriages were recognised in 2014 under The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013. Many gay couples married their partners at the stroke of midnight on the 29th of March 2014, when the law formally came into effect. Scotland legalised gay marriage in December 2014 and the Republic of Ireland followed suit in November 2015. While it still remains illegal in Northern Ireland, there is mounting pressure for a change in the law. Gender reassignment is protected under the Equality Act 2010, previously there was no specific law relating to being treated differently due to being transsexual.

Although, there have been many positive examples of change across the UK influenced by LGBT movements, these extraordinary developments are often forgotten amongst the discrimination and unfair treatment that remains. The path toward justice for LGBT rights is still one being forged through formidable barriers and the fight for equality is most definitely still on.

If you feel as though you need further assistance with any of the topics mentioned in this guidance, please call our helpline on:

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