



Mental health and primary care (your GP practice)

Information from Mid Essex CCG
Mental Health Team

Common general symptoms of mental health conditions

- Feeling more anxious or nervous than usual
- Unable to sleep as usual
- Tired all the time – to a point of not doing normal activities
- Feelings of low self-esteem / not being good enough
- Not being able to cope with usual day-to-day stresses

Ways to recognise common issues

Anxiety

- Worrying about a problem all the time (“wired all the time”)
- Irritable mood, poor concentration
- Disturbed sleep – difficult to settle, wake up thinking about problems
- Eye contact usually normal
- Reduced appetite, may lose weight
- Palpitations, sweating, chest pain
- Nausea, diarrhoea, urinary urgency
- *CAN LEAD TO DEPRESSION*

Depression

- Tired all the time
- Early-morning waking, difficulty getting to sleep, sleepy during day
- Increased or reduced appetite
- Reduced activity – stops doing hobbies, less interest in home life
- Poor concentration
- Poor eye contact, slow speech, can be difficult to establish rapport – speech limited or monosyllabic

30-50% of cases have symptoms from both columns

Primary care for young people

- Aged under 18
- Often have predominant anxiety symptoms and sleep disturbance
- Primary care clinicians should NOT prescribe SSRI-type antidepressants*
- These may lead to suicidal thoughts / impetuous overdose
 - Primary care will refer on for further assessment
- Primary care clinicians should NOT prescribe benzodiazepines* (a type of tranquilliser) or sleeping tablets
 - This is a specialist prescribing decision due to the risk of accidental overdose / further anxiety

* See NHS Choices for more details

Young people possibly needing more than primary care (and/or medication)

- Use Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service
 - Accessed through self-referral or GP referral
 - Phone: **0300 300 1600** (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)
 - Email: EWMHS@nelft.nhs.uk

Primary care for adults

Anxiety

- Psychological therapies are mainstay of management
 - Computer-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
 - 1-to-1 or group CBT
 - Applied relaxation therapy
- ONLY if therapy does not work, or if symptoms seriously affect day-to-day life, would medication (SSRIs) be considered

Depression

- Tranquillisers are “depressants” and make depression worse, with a risk of overdose in those with suicidal thoughts
- For mild to moderate depression, psychological therapies are better than medication
 - This could be CBT, interpersonal behavioural therapy, psychotherapy
- For moderate to severe depression
 - Medication (SSRIs) combined with psychological therapies would be considered

Symptoms / signs that your GP may ask about

- Suicidal thoughts (they should always ask about this)
- Feeling worthless / useless, or someone thinking themselves a burden to others
- Unable to wash, eat or take basic care of themselves
- Paranoia (feeling of being watched / listened to by others)
- Your GP will be looking for a mix of common symptoms among older people (or men of any age)

Special cases

- Men – much higher risk of suicide than women, tend to seek help at later stages of condition
- Young adults (aged 18-25) – higher risk of self-harm and unintentional overdose / suicide with medication. Clinicians **will take great care** when prescribing any “psychoactive” medicines (see NHS Choices for further explanation of these)
- Older people – high risk of falls while taking any psychoactive medication. Primary care should not start them on tranquillisers

Referral and support

Health in Mind (formerly know as IAPT)

- Accessed by:
 - Self referral online – see <http://bit.ly/HealthInMindME>
 - Self referral Calling 01376 308704
- All main types of therapy and support offered
 - GPs should refer all cases of anxiety / depression by default
 - Therapy rooms available across mid Essex

Mid Essex CCG mental health commissioning team can advise on services available – email meccg.ppe@nhs.net

Mid Essex CCG Clinical Lead for mental health – Dr Sam Bhima, who can be contacted via the above email address