

9-15
november
2014



national
psychology
week



Media release

UNDER EMBARGO UNTIL 00:01 9 November 2014

Men less stressed in new survey

Australian women experiencing higher levels of stress and lower levels of wellbeing than men

A new survey shows Australian men are doing better than women when it comes to stress and wellbeing with men reporting higher levels of wellbeing and lower levels of stress than their female counterparts.

Released today to launch National Psychology Week (9-15 November) the *Stress and Wellbeing in Australia survey 2014*, conducted by the Australian Psychological Society (APS), found that, for the first time, men have significantly higher levels of wellbeing than women.

The annual survey provides a yearly snapshot of the overall wellbeing of Australians, suggesting 2014 was a tougher year for women, with the fairer sex reporting significantly higher levels of stress.

Family and personal finance issues were identified as the leading sources of stress for both sexes, but these factors are having a greater effect on women.

More than half (53%) of Australian women cite personal financial issues as a major source of stress, compared to just 44 per cent of men. Correspondingly, more than half (52%) of all women reported family issues as a major source of stress compared to just 38 per cent of men.

Professor Lyn Littlefield, Executive Director of the APS, said identifying sources of stress is the first step to effectively managing stress.

"Stress can have an extremely detrimental effect on a person's mental and physical health. It's important to first identify the cause of stress to work towards avoiding the source, or adopting stress management behaviours," Professor Littlefield said.

"Different people are affected by different things, but it is interesting to see the varying impact family and personal financial issues have on stress levels for men and women."

More than 70 per cent (72%) of Australians reported their current stress levels had an impact on their physical health. Worryingly, more than 60 per cent (64%) reported current stress levels had an impact on their mental health.

Women also reported a greater impact of stress on their health: more women (21%) than men (13%) said that stress was strongly impacting their physical health and more women (23%) than men (14%) reported that stress was strongly impacting their mental health.

Identifying warning signs and triggers, establishing workable routines, keeping healthy, changing negative 'self-talk', practising relaxation and getting appropriate support are suggested by the APS as effective measures to manage stress.

"Talking about mental health is difficult for a lot of Australians. National Psychology Week provides an opportunity to start a conversation, or encourage Australians who might be struggling to ask for help," Professor Littlefield said.

"If you're feeling overwhelmed, or if you notice your stress levels are having a negative impact on your mental or physical health I encourage you to see a psychologist. Everyone needs help at some time, and it's okay to ask for it."

Continued:

www.psychology.org.au/NPW

9-15
november
2014



national
psychology
week



The APS provides a free referral service for the general public, GPs and other health professionals who are seeking the advice and assistance of a psychologist at www.findapsychologist.org.au. To access detailed advice about managing stress, you may view the APS tip-sheet [here](#).

-ENDS-

Media contact Mindy Gold, (02) 9237 2808 // 0431 143 897, mgold@buchanwe.com.au

Other significant survey findings include:

- Australians with obesity reported significantly lower levels of overall wellbeing than non-obese Australians;
- Australians engaging in healthy lifestyle behaviours reported significantly lower levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms than those who were not
- Older Australians (66+) continued to report significantly higher levels of wellbeing compared with other Australians;
- Young adults (18-35) reported the highest levels of depression and anxiety symptoms

Signs of stress include:

- Sleep disturbance, insomnia
- Upset stomach
- Anxiety
- Anger, irritability
- Depressive
- Feeling overwhelmed, out of control
- Fatigue

Tips for managing stress:

- Spend time with people who care about you and share your feelings
- Notice negative self-talk "I can't cope", "I'm too tired"
- Identify triggers, situations that make you stressed and try to avoid them
- Exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy diet and stay well-nourished
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs
- Get enough sleep

For more stress information and tips to: <http://www.psychology.org.au/NPW/stresstips/>

Note to editors: A copy of the survey report is available upon request.

Professor Lyn Littlefield and a number of other psychologists are available for interview throughout National Psychology Week.

Media contact

Mindy Gold, (02) 9237 2808 // 0431 143 897, mgold@buchanwe.com.au

About the APS

The APS is the largest professional organisation for psychologists in Australia, representing more than 21,000 members. The APS is committed to advancing psychology as a discipline and profession. It spreads the message that psychologists make a difference to people's lives, through improving psychological knowledge and community wellbeing. During National Psychology Week, APS psychologists around Australia host a large number of events and activities in their local communities to highlight psychology – the science of human behaviour – and how it can help people lead happier, healthier lives. To find an event go to www.psychology.org.au/NPW. You can follow the latest updates

www.psychology.org.au/NPW

9-15
november
2014



national
psychology
week



APS
Australian
Psychological
Society

from APS via Twitter @APS_Media, and join the conversation about National Psychology Week via #NPW2014 and on Facebook www.facebook.com/NationalPsychologyWeek