

# Mental Health Insights for Healthcare Practitioners



Reading time:  
Pamela Ferrada

Last Modified on 02/05/2024 1:52 pm AEST

Tags: [Medical Practitioner](#) | [Article](#) | [Health & Wellbeing](#)

## The warning signs...

- Self prescribing and inappropriate use of medications
- Practitioners with established mental health conditions
- Poor performance or assessment
- Being bullied or harassed (however appropriate performance management is not bullying or harassment)
- Regular disputes with your colleagues
- International healthcare graduates facing isolation, prejudice or cultural and communication issues.

## Key messages

- many bad behaviours and co-morbidities begin whilst at medical school
- a prevalence of psychiatric morbidity in final medical school year and can increase significantly during internship
- psychiatric morbidity, substance abuse and relationship problems are common.
- a higher depression rate than the general population, a small percentage of practitioners had suicidal ideations
- Many doctors do not look after themselves - almost a third do not have a GP, roughly half write their own prescriptions and 30% have not seen a doctor for years
- AHPRA have a number of reporting requirements surrounding impairment. These include self-reporting and mandatory reporting. The implications can be serious. Self-reporting impairment may minimise the consequences as it shows insight and a willingness to obtain help .

## Strategies

- Never prescribe S8 drugs for yourself or family, always properly record and dispose of drugs
- Develop a healthy work life balance - do not overdo either
- Contact your MDO early with any issues - note MDO advisers are exempt from mandatory reporting to AHPRA
- Show insight - reach out and seek out help, support and assistance. This is not a weakness and you will not be stigmatised. Get help from your GP, employee assistance programs, Beyondblue Mental Health Program for doctors, your State based doctors help programs and your MDO.
- Supervision and dealing with bullying are both skills that need to be taught and learnt.

## When in doubt

- Contact MIPS 24hr Clinico-legal Support. 1800 061 113

## Related articles

---



CAREER LEADERSHIP PROGRAM >