



Mandurah

Psychological Services



Bunbury

Psychological Services

Your EAP Team

What Does the Research Say?



Julie-Anne Davies

Managing Director and Senior Psychologist

In this day and age, it is likely that everywhere you go you take your smart-phone with you. We use them to communicate with loved ones, read the news, watch movies, and pay for shopping – but can our use of smart phones and other devices be having a negative impact on our wellbeing?

In this month's newsletter I would like to discuss the pitfalls of smart-phone use, how to recognise if your usage may be impacting your wellbeing, and some tips and tricks to navigate this.

If you believe you are struggling with your mental health or wellbeing, please consult with your GP or contact us here at Mandurah & Bunbury Psychological Services for an appointment with one of our qualified practitioners who will guide you towards better management of your mental health.

In 2017, the number of smartphone users in Australia was estimated to be 18.6 million and predicted to climb to reach 21.5 million in five years' time.

Research shows there is a relationship between high levels of smart-phone use and higher levels of anxiety.

Similar findings indicate that a relationship may exist between levels of stress and depression and higher smart-phone usage.

To be clear, this does not mean increased mobile phone use is the cause of psychological distress, in fact higher usage may be a form of coping with increased psychological distress.

People who have experienced difficulties with anxiety and depression in the past may find increased smart-phone usage can worsen mental wellbeing.

We know there is a relationship between higher smart-phone usage, and lower mental wellbeing, but how? and why?



91% of Australians
have a
smartphone
device

Studies suggest people use smart-phones to escape or cope with anxiety and stress, for example using their phones when in an uncomfortable or awkward situation.

Most modern communication is via text often leading to an increase in anxiety as messages can be misinterpreted or seem ambiguous.

Being social is a cornerstone of mental wellbeing. This can be hard to simulate in the virtual world, leading to less meaningful social connection which can lead to lower mood.

Warning Signs & Self-Help Tips

Here are some common warning signs that your smart-phone use could be damaging your mental wellbeing:

- Trouble completing tasks at work or home? Not completing things on time due to distraction or procrastination from smart-phone use?
- Isolation from family and friends? Are you connecting with people less? Is it hard to keep up with conversation because you are checking your phone?
- Have a fear of missing out? Do you worry you are missing out on important social or world events if you don't check your phone regularly?
- Do you worry if you leave your smartphone at home? Do you feel deflated, disappointed, upset if you have no new notifications or messages?

Below are some tips you can try yourself to deal with problematic smart-phone use. These can be easier to put in place with the support of family, friends, or a professional therapist such as those at our Mandurah and Bunbury offices.

Recognise your usage triggers? Is it when you're feeling lonely? Bored? Stressed?

Set goals for usage. Try setting time limits, or use device time as a reward for completing other tasks such as work or chores.

Don't use your device in bed. Light from screens makes getting to sleep much harder. Try to have no screen time at least 2 hours before bed.

Replace smart-phone usage with other activities. Using your phone when bored? Reconnect with your old hobbies. Using your phone when lonely? Catch up with a friend for coffee and leave your phone behind.



Tel: 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au



Tel: 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au



Phone: 0417 968 569
Fax: 9535 1682
E: reception@mandurahpsychology.com.au
Address: 22A/B Tuckey Street, Mandurah, 6210



Phone: 0447 713 200
Fax: 9787 9474
E: bpsadmin@bunburypsychologist.com.au
Address: 3/27 Bonnefoi Blvd., Bunbury, 6230



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