



Women's Health Victoria

healthy empowered equal

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MEDIA RELEASE

Mental health prevention programs aimed at young women urgently needed

New research findings published by Mission Australia and Black Dog Institute is further evidence that targeted preventative actions are needed to address mental health issues among young women.

Young women and young men experience mental health issues differently, with young women almost twice as likely to meet the criteria for having a serious mental illness, according to the latest Youth Mental Health Report. Body image is a particular concern for young women who meet the criteria for having a mental illness, with 66% citing that they are either 'very' or 'extremely' concerned about body image.

'These findings are consistent with what we already know about the relationship between the pressures on women to meet an unrealistic beauty ideal and mental illness', said Ms Rita Butera, Executive Director of Women's Health Victoria.

'Negative body image is a risk factor for disordered eating, and can lead to eating disorders and obesity in young women'.

Women's Health Victoria works with professionals and organisations in developing targeted programs to meet the needs and concerns of women. 'It is extremely important that mental health prevention programs aimed at young women consider their lived experience, including the cultural pressures around feminine ideals.' said Ms Butera.

'Given the high proportion of young women with mental illness and eating disorders, a targeted approach to prevention aimed at young women is urgently required.'

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