

Men's Health

Challenges in the 21st Century. "...the hardest victory is over self..." – Aristotle.

The 21st century has posed humanity with numerous unique challenges which impact us all. We experience these challenges differently and to varying degrees, and from moment to moment, we make choices about how we respond. Navigating these challenges impact both our physical and mental health, with some disproportionately impacting men. For example; men experience higher levels of suicide, report higher levels of loneliness and addiction to illicit drugs and gambling (ABS 2024, ABS 2023, AIHW 2026 & AIHE 2025). Some researchers argue that life has never before been more complicated for men, making it more crucial than ever to focus on how we tackle the challenges that come with modern life, both for ourselves and for the other men in our lives.

Wielding our self control

We often only discuss mental health negatively when things are tough, which may prevent us from thinking about what good mental health looks like. Our mental health is mainly affected by biological, psychological and social factors.

Biological Examples: physical health, genetics, disabilities, drug use, physical addiction.

Psychological Examples: Thoughts, feelings, behaviours, coping skills, psychological addiction

Social Examples: Peer relationships, family relationships, finance, sexual connection.

Some factors we can't control, others we can. To improve our mental health, let's focus on what we can influence. For example: you may be dealing with some grief which will pass over time.

In your grief you may support your mental health by leaning into the things within you of sphere of control, such as your sleep, your healthy relationships and avoiding things which may lead you to feeling worse (such as drinking, drugging or overthinking).

Double edged sword

In the busy push and pull of daily life it can be hard to make time to nourish ourselves with the things we need, such as relaxation, good food or physical connection. Instead, we may turn to self-soothing behaviours which provide temporary relief but may create a future problem or need. For example, we associate relaxing with having an alcoholic drink. These behaviours are "doubled edged swords". It's important we all be intentional with how we mediate our relationship with these double-edged swords, so we don't end up cutting ourselves.

- Drinking: may lead to hangover, poor sleep, decrease social control
- Smoking: may lead to Cancer risk, dependency, erectile dysfunction
- Gambling: may lead to increased financial risk, impacted relationships, addiction
- Drug use: may lead to dependency, health risk, decrease social control
- Pornography: may lead to lower libido, impacted sexual connection, erectile dysfunction.

BSS PSYCHOLOGY | IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GRYPHON PSYCHOLOGY



Each of these double-edged sword strategies can lead to dependency or addiction because they create a vicious cycle. They often satisfy a need but then create a deficit that may be filled by re-engaging with the strategy. See below an example of how this vicious cycle may play out for someone who is having difficulty getting to sleep.



What if I get stuck?

Getting stuck in the vicious cycle can be tough, isolating, and make us feel trapped. It's important to know that it's going to be okay. Your brain can unlearn behaviours as much as it can learn them. Seeking professional support can help.

How BSS can help

Your BSS EAP is a resource here to support you. If you're struggling with your mental health, it doesn't mean it has to stay that way. Your BSS EAP provides you with confidential counselling with a Clinician.

We can support you by:

- Providing non-judgemental wellbeing support
- Helping you create a plan to manage stress and challenges
- Exploring thoughts, feelings, and behaviours affecting your mental wellbeing.
- Explore current and potential future strategies in supporting you through life's challenges.

Tackling the financial stress with BSS:

Finance can sometimes feel like one of the things we do not have control over, BSS offers financial coaching which may help you:

- Build practical money skills and confidence
- Develop healthy financial habits
- Work towards realistic financial goals

What to expect

- A supportive, personalised conversation about your situation
- Practical steps to improve money management
- Option to include a partner or family member

Note: Financial coaching does not include financial, tax, legal, or investment advice.

If you would like to speak with our team about Men's Health, email our team at intake@bsspsych.com.au webchat at **bsspsych.com.au** or call **1800 30 30 90**

BSS Psychology Garden Office Park, Building C, Level 3, 355 Scarborough Beach Road, Osborne Park, WA 6017

Counselling available Australia-wide

appt@bsspsych.com.au 1800 30 30 90 or webchat www.bsspsych.com.au

BSS PSYCHOLOGY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GRYPHON PSYCHOLOGY