

Become responsible for your own mental health – Craig Hamilton (Mental Illness & Health speaker)



My Story

My own experience with mental illness has taught me many valuable life lessons. The most important lesson has been that by creating an environment which promotes healing both on a mental and physical level, recovery is possible. My experience with clinical depression and bipolar disorder turned my life upside down and it took time and a fundamental change in my attitude to re-balance my life and regain optimum health. I believe we can all change and improve our health.

Our choices everyday impact on our health tomorrow

Today, my health is good but I no longer take my health for granted and assume it will always be good as I once did. By making good decisions and taking ownership over my own well-being I intend to keep it that way. For the past decade I have been sharing what I have learnt through my own experience of mental illness by speaking publicly in many forums around Australia.

I have also written two books. Broken Open (published 2004) and A Better Life (2012). Both books map out my experiences and the road I've walked to recovery.

The 21st century, with all our technological advancements still presents many challenges on the health front. Stress, anxiety, depression and other forms of mental ill health are for many people a daily reality.

Taking the first step

It took me many years to realise that our physical, mental and spiritual health are all interwoven and by becoming more “aware“ of our lifestyle and how we recognise our stress and relieve stress, we change our health for the better. It is possible, but recognising that change is necessary as the first step. For most of us, stress is only noticeable when it affects our sense of wellbeing and starts to have a negative impact on our work life, relationships, energy levels, mood and sleep patterns.

Usually by the time all those things are being negatively affected the stress level is already high, anxiety may be present and mild or moderate depression may be present as well. Then, some of us act to change things and take action but many of us still do nothing, assuming we are powerless to work through the issues and continue to suffer the effects of poor mental health.

Becoming aware

I have learnt some very valuable lessons along the way and now firmly believe that being “more aware” of our mood, sleep pattern, stress levels, workload, diet, emotions, self-talk (the voice in your head that judges everything including ourselves!) the better our mental health will be. A big part of achieving this “awareness” is actually becoming responsible for our mental health and owning our choices every day.

It takes effort to make change but the effort is worth it

By consciously doing things each day that minimise stress (meditate, exercise, yoga) we CREATE an environment where stress, anxiety and depression don't have to be the overriding experiences in our lives. I believe the key to managing these states of ill health is to make a change before we need to!