

Causes of Mental Health Issues: Plain English

- Mental health issues have no single cause. They can come from a combination of genetics, brain, environment, culture, and life experience.
- Being Deafblind does not cause mental health issues. The cause is being Deafblind with no access and bad attitudes/lack of Deafblind awareness in the community.

Bullying/Discrimination:

- Many Deafblind people know what it's like to be picked on or left out because they are Deafblind.
- This can happen at any time in life in many different places such as at school, at work or in the community.
- These experiences can impact someone's mental health especially if they have been happening for a long time.

Financial Stress:

- Paying for supports and technology can get expensive and many Deafblind people are stressed about money.
- Deafblind people also have more barriers to finding a job which can make them worry about money.

Barriers to participating in activities or groups:

- Most shops, events and services are not set up the right way for Deafblind access. Most of the staff at those places are also not very Deafblind aware.
- This means most Deafblind people have limited choices about where they can go and what they can do. This can impact mental health over time.

Social Isolation:

- Deafblind people often find it hard to make or stay in touch with friends.
- Many Deafblind people also don't feel welcome in the Deaf community.
- Feeling lonely and cut off from the world can have an impact on your mental health.

Health problems or ongoing medical procedures:

- Being Deafblind often means lots of trips to the doctor. This could be for checks/tests related to deafblindness or other disabilities.
- The stress of this and communication barriers can lead to mental health issues.

Adjusting to acquired disability and loss of independence:

- If someone becomes Deafblind later in life it is a huge change which can bring feelings of grief and loss.
- Even if someone has been Deafblind for a long time, their hearing and vision may change over time.
- For both it often means not being able to do things anymore or needing to learn new ways to do things. These changes can be very upsetting because the person now needs more support and feels less independent.
- Many Deafblind people also have to explain their needs to the NDIA every time something changes. The staff there don't have good Deafblind awareness and the experience is very stressful.

Difficulty in sourcing supports:

- There are not enough interpreters or CommGuides and Deafblind people often miss out on things because there is no support available.
- Deafblind people also experience stress when supports don't have the right skills. For example, many interpreters do not know how to work with Deafblind people.
- Since the NDIS started many Deafblind people feel exploited because workers see them as a way to make money.

Difficulties accessing mental health supports:

- Not many counsellors or psychologists have experience with Deafblind people.
- Not many interpreters have the right skills to work in mental health.
- This creates a barrier that can make mental health issues worse.
- If a person had a bad experience with a counsellor or psychologist in the past they may be less confident to ask for help in the future.