



Male bonding: good for your mental health

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Lack of social connections can lead to a higher risk of developing a mental health condition, but Australian men have a range of opportunities for social interactions, according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Dr Paul Jelfs, ABS General Manager of Population and Social Statistics, said that 75 per cent of Australian men had weekly face-to-face contact with family or friends living outside their household in 2014, while almost 9 in 10 men (89 per cent) also had weekly contact through other means such as phone calls, text messaging and email.

Sport was a popular form of social interaction, with around three quarters of all men participating in physical recreation in 2014 and just over half attending a sporting event as a spectator.

"Sport is a great way for men to get together, and regardless of whether they play or watch, men are able to gain mental health benefits through spending time with friends," said Dr Jelfs.

Dr Jelfs said that volunteering can also have mental health benefits by giving men a sense of purpose and enjoyment. In 2014, around 2.6 million Australian men participated in voluntary work, with 78 per cent of these men saying that they did so for personal satisfaction or to help others and their community.

"In general, younger men are more likely to help with sporting teams while older men are more likely to volunteer for welfare, community or religious organisations," said Dr Jelfs.

Other popular activities for men were attending movies (65 per cent), visiting botanic gardens, zoos or aquariums (45 per cent), and attending concerts, theatres or other performing arts events (44 per cent).

Further information can be found in General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2014 (cat. no. 4159.0), available for free download from the ABS website: <http://www.abs.gov.au/>.

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