

# Anxiety, Depression & Severe Asthma

## WHAT IS ANXIETY?



Ongoing & disproportionately strong fear, worry or stress and avoidance of situations that cause fear or worry

## WHAT IS DEPRESSION?



Sadness



Emptiness



Irritability

**ANXIETY & DEPRESSION IMPAIR A PERSON'S ABILITY TO FUNCTION IN THEIR LIVES AND OFTEN OCCUR TOGETHER**

Anxiety **1.4x** more common in people with severe compared with non-severe asthma  
Depression **3.3x**

Anxiety and Depression are **1.5 - 2.4x**



more common in people with asthma compared to healthy controls

## HOW DOES IT RELATE TO ASTHMA?

**COMORBID ANXIETY OR DEPRESSION WORSEN ASTHMA OUTCOMES, SUCH AS:**

- Reduced asthma control
- Impaired quality of life
- Reduced lung function
- Impaired functional outcomes
- Increased healthcare use



PERCENTAGE OF THE SEVERE ASTHMA POPULATION:

ANXIETY

38%

DEPRESSION

25%

## SCREENING & REFERRAL:

- Self-report questionnaires
  - » Hospital Anxiety & Depression Scale (HADS)
  - » Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)
- Exclude dysfunctional breathing as alternative diagnosis
- Refer for psychologist / psychiatrist assessment



## MANAGEMENT OPTIONS:

**Mental health problems in asthma are undertreated. Options include:**



Lifestyle changes (e.g. exercise, healthy diet, weight loss, sleep hygiene)



Psychological interventions (e.g. counselling & cognitive behaviour therapy)



Pharmacological interventions (e.g. antidepressants)



Social support