

MYTHS&FACTS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health problems are rare

1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem, which means someone you know may be struggling with mental illness.

I can't do anything to support someone with a mental health problem

There are lots of things you can do to make a difference to their life:

- Check in
- Listen and don't judge
- Treat them in the same way
- Ask Twice

People with mental illness aren't able to work

People with a mental illness can hold down a successful job. We all probably work with someone experiencing a mental health problem.

You can't recover from
mental health problems

They might not go away forever but
lots of people with mental health
problems still work, have families and
lead full lives

People with mental illness are usually violent and unpredictable

Most people with mental health problems, even those with severe ones like schizophrenia, are not violent. Someone with a mental illness is more likely to be a victim of violence than inflict it.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is only a military man's disease

PTSD is not just a military man's disease. Anyone can have PTSD. A rape or sexual assault victim, a domestic abuse victim, a survivor of a natural disaster, someone who's suffered a loss or even a person who did not face any violence or physical threats themselves directly, but happened to witness someone else who did.

Psychiatric medications are bad

Just like any other medical condition, mental illness is still an illness. For many with mental illness, medication is necessary, just like it would be for a diabetic taking insulin.

For some individuals with mental illness, medication is needed for survival. For others, like those who have mild to moderate depression, anxiety, or ADHD, medication can help ease symptoms, so they can function normally.

And having regular therapy combined with medication can greatly improve one's quality of life.

Prevention doesn't work. It is impossible to prevent mental illnesses.

Prevention of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders focuses on addressing known risk factors such as exposure to trauma that can affect the chances that children, youth, and young adults will develop mental health problems.

Mental illness is incurable and lifelong

With the right kind of help, treated appropriately and early, most people recover fully and have no further episodes of illness. For others, mental illness may recur throughout their lives and require ongoing treatment. This is the same as many physical illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease. Like these other long-term health conditions, mental illness can be managed so that individuals live life to the fullest.

People are born with a mental illness

A vulnerability to some mental illnesses, such as bipolar mood disorder, can run in families. But other people develop mental illness with no family history. Many factors contribute to the onset of a mental illness.

Only certain types of people
develop a mental illness

Everyone is vulnerable to mental health
problems. It affects people regardless of
age, education, income or culture.

Mental illness is caused by
a personal weakness

A mental illness is not a character flaw. It is caused by a complex interplay of genetic, biological, social and environmental factors. Seeking and accepting help is a sign of resilience and strength.

People with a mental illness should be isolated from the community

Most people with a mental illness recover quickly and do not need hospital care. Others may have short admissions to hospital for treatment. Only a very small number of people with mental illness (less than 1 in 1000) need hospital care. Improvements in treatment over recent decades mean that most people live in their communities, and there is no need for the confinement and isolation that was commonly used in the past.

Asking a person about suicide
will only increase their risk

Asking someone directly about suicide
intent lowers anxiety, opens up
communication and lowers the risk of an
impulsive act.

Physical health problems are worse than mental health problems

Just because you can't see a mental illness doesn't mean it's any less painful than a broken arm. A mental health problem can feel just as bad as, or worse than, any other illness and requires just as much support.

Children don't experience mental health problems

Even very young children may show early warning signs of mental health concerns. These mental health problems are often clinically diagnosable, and can be a product of the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors.

Half of all mental health disorders show first signs before a person turns 14 years old, and three quarters of mental health disorders begin before age 24.

Unfortunately, less than 20% of children and adolescents with diagnosable mental health problems receive the treatment they need. Early mental health support can help a child before problems interfere with other developmental needs.

Therapy and self-help are a waste of time.
Why bother when you can just take a pill?

Treatment for mental health problems varies depending on the individual and could include medication, therapy, or both. Many individuals work with a support system during the healing and recovery process.

I can't do anything for a person with a mental health problem

Friends and loved ones can make a big difference. Only 44% of adults with diagnosable mental health problems and less than 20% of children and adolescents receive needed treatment. Friends and family can be important influences to help someone get the treatment and services they need