

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH

When we recognize that having a mental health condition is just like having a physical health issue or illness, we can begin to remove the barriers to recovery and promote healing that leads to a positive state of mental and emotional well-being.

THE IMPACT OF MENTAL ILLNESS

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), a mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, or mood. Such conditions can vary in impact, ranging from no impairment to mild, moderate, or severe which can substantially interfere with or limit one's ability to relate to others or function each day.



GLOBALLY

Around **450 million** people currently suffer from mental disorders worldwide.¹

More than **300 million** people suffer from depression and more than **260 million** are living with anxiety disorders. Many of these people live with both.²

Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide.

THE GOOD NEWS

Healing and recovery can be possible. An accurate diagnosis from a mental health clinician can help determine the appropriate treatment that may include a combination of medical evaluation, medication, counseling, social support, lifestyle changes, and education.

COMMON TYPES

Research suggests that multiple factors such as genetics, biological, environmental, and life experiences can influence whether someone develops a mental health condition.⁴ Above are some common types of mental illnesses but keep in mind that this is not an exhaustive list.

¹ World Health Organization (WHO) stat: https://www.who.int/whr/2001/media_centre/press_release/en/
² World Health Organization (WHO): https://www.who.int/mental_health/world-mental-health-day/2017/en/
³ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-FRR1-2016/NSDUH-FRR1-2016.pdf>
⁴ National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-conditions>

OVERCOMING STIGMA

False beliefs and negative stigma about mental health issues is one of the biggest challenges we face today.

DEBUNKING THE MYTHS

Stigma can lead to discrimination, when someone is viewed in a negative way or feared that they are unstable or dangerous due to mental illness. Learn the truth about these five common myths about mental illness.

MYTH

MENTAL ILLNESS IS CAUSED BY PERSONAL WEAKNESS.

Just like any major physical illness, mental illness is not the fault of the person who has a mental health condition. It is caused by environmental and biological factors, not a result of personal weakness.

MYTH

PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH ILLNESS ARE VIOLENT AND DANGEROUS.

The truth is, living with a mental health condition makes a person four times as likely to be a victim of bullying, harassment, or physical violence. And no more likely to conduct a violent act.

MYTH

YOU CAN NEVER GET BETTER FROM A MENTAL ILLNESS.

Mental health issues are not always lifelong disorders. There are more treatments, services, and community support systems than ever before, and they work to make recovery a reality for many people; just like managing diabetes or high blood pressure.

MYTH

PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS CAN'T HANDLE WORK OR SCHOOL.

Stressful situations can be difficult for all people, not just those who live with mental illness. People with mental health conditions have jobs, go to school, and are active members of their communities.

MYTH

YOU CAN'T HELP SOMEONE WITH MENTAL ILLNESS.

Friends and family can be important influences to help someone get the treatment and services they need. When you speak and act in a way that preserve personal dignity, you can help to remove mental illness stigma in our society.



END THE STIGMA

Stigma can shame someone into silence and prevents them from seeking necessary help. Through powerful words and actions, we can shift the social and systemic barriers for those living with mental health conditions. **Here's how you can show support:**



EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- Know the facts. Challenge the myths and stereotypes.
- Speak out against stigma.
- Be conscious about language. Don't use hurtful slangs or derogatory words.
- Take a Mental Health First Aid training course.

<https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>



TALK OPENLY ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

- Treat mental health just as you would your physical health. Having the need to see a mental health professional should be the same as visiting your primary care physician, dentist, or optometrist.
- Don't equate people with their illness. Instead of saying "Pat is bipolar," say "Pat has a bipolar disorder."



SHOW COMPASSION AND BE SUPPORTIVE

- Treat people who have mental health conditions with dignity and respect.
- Be reassuring and caring. Genuinely express your concern and support.
- Demonstrate empathy with active listening.
- Understand that people can experience the same condition differently.

SELF-CARE STRATEGY

To be able to care for others, you must first take care of your own mental and emotional well-being. **Building resilience helps you, weather hard times and enjoy good ones. If you are struggling with a mental health issue, talk to your primary care physician to get the proper treatment and referral to services.**

WAYS TO MIND YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

TAKE A BREAK

Creating time for rest and recovery helps you reenergize and connect to other important areas of your life. Block time during the week and weekends to recharge. Plan your vacations ahead of time to ensure you build in time to disconnect throughout the year.

BUILD RESILIENT HABITS

A good night's sleep, movement, nutrition, relaxation, and meditation can all positively improve your ability to manage stress and build resilience. Even small tweaks to your lifestyle can add up to make a big impact.



TALK IT OUT

When you feel overwhelmed or stressed, talking with a trusted family member or friend can be helpful. Sometimes when you need more support, consulting with a mental health clinician can give you the tools needed to address your challenges privately and confidentially.

STAY CONNECTED AND GIVE BACK

Avoid feeling lonely and isolated by keeping in touch with friends and family or starting new friendships. Acts of kindness and gratitude can improve your mood and make you feel more connected to your community. Try a volunteer activity to help you connect to your purpose and cultivate meaning in your life.

WARNING SIGNS

Don't ignore the warning signs. Each illness has its own symptoms, but common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following:



BE SUPPORTIVE

Speaking openly about mental health helps break down stigmas and removes barriers to treatment.

START A CONVERSATION

If you have a friend or family member struggling with a mental health issue and you are unsure of how best to offer support, here are some helpful tips:

TRY LEADING WITH THESE QUESTIONS:

I've been worried about you. Can we talk about what you are experiencing?

I listen and want to listen. What do you want me to know about how you are feeling?

It seems like you are going through a difficult time. How can I help you to find help?

Ask the person to have coffee or go for a walk or find a private space where you won't be interrupted or distracted.



BE RESPECTFUL

compassionate, and empathetic. Be a good listener. Give them the opportunity to talk and open up.

REMINDE THEM HELP IS AVAILABLE

and offer to connect them to appropriate resources.

Ease into the conversation, gradually. The person may not be ready to talk, and that is OK.

GIVE THE PERSON HOPE.

Encourage them to seek professional help, and continue to offer support and encouragement.