

Mental Illness/Accurate Diagnosis



Diagnosis

To determine a diagnosis and check for related complications, you may have:

- A physical exam. Your doctor will try to rule out physical problems that could cause your symptoms.
- Lab tests. These may include, for example, a check of your thyroid function or a screening for alcohol and drugs.
- A psychological evaluation. A doctor or mental health professional talks to you about your symptoms, thoughts, feelings and behavior patterns. You may be asked to fill out a questionnaire to help answer these questions.¹

Determining which mental illness you have

Sometimes it is difficult to find out which mental illness may be causing your symptoms. But taking the time and effort to get an accurate diagnosis will help determine the appropriate treatment. The more information you have, the more you will be prepared to work with your mental health professional in understanding what your symptoms may represent.

The defining symptoms for each mental illness are detailed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5), published by the American Psychiatric Association. This manual is used by mental health professionals to diagnose mental conditions and by insurance companies to reimburse for treatment.¹

Treatment

Your treatment depends on the type of mental illness you have, its severity and what works best for you. In many cases, a combination of treatments works best.

If you have a mild mental illness with well-controlled symptoms, treatment from your primary care provider may be sufficient. However, often a team approach is appropriate to make sure all your psychiatric, medical and social needs are met. This is especially important for severe mental illnesses, such as schizophrenia. ¹

Classes of mental illness

- Neurodevelopmental disorders
- Schizophrenia spectrum and other psychotic disorders.
- Bipolar and related disorders
- Depressive disorders
- Anxiety disorders
- Obsessive-compulsive and related disorders
- Trauma- and stressor-related disorders.
- Dissociative disorders
- Somatic symptom and related disorders
- Feeding and eating disorders
- Elimination disorders
- Sleep-wake disorders.
- Sexual dysfunctions.
- Gender dysphoria
- Disruptive, impulse-control and conduct disorders.
- Substance-related and addictive disorders
- Neurocognitive disorders
- Personality disorders
- Paraphilic disorders
- Other mental disorders.¹

Your treatment team

Your treatment team may include your:

- Family or primary care doctor
- Nurse practitioner
- Physician assistant
- Psychiatrist, a medical doctor who diagnoses and treats mental illnesses
- Psychotherapist, such as a psychologist or a licensed counselor
- Pharmacist
- Social worker
- Family members¹

¹<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20374974>