



# Myths About Mental Health

## Myths & Facts

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**Myth:** Mental health problems don't affect me.

**Fact:** 1 in 5 adults have experienced a mental health issue.

**Myth:** Children don't experience mental health problems.

**Fact:** Half of all mental health disorders show first signs before the age of 14, three quarters before the age of 24. Unfortunately, less than 20% of children and adolescents with diagnosable mental health problems receive the treatment they need.

**Myth:** Personality weakness or character flaws cause mental health problems. People with mental health problems can snap out of it if they try hard enough.

**Fact:** Mental health problems have nothing to do with being lazy or weak and many people need help to get better. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes, physical illness, injury, or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or a history of abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

**Myth:** People with mental health problems are violent and unpredictable.

**Fact:** Most people with mental health problems are no more likely to be violent than anyone else. Only 3-5% of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness.

## More Information

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Mental illnesses affect almost every family in America.

People with mental illnesses make important contributions to our families and our communities. People with mental illnesses recover, often by working with mental health professionals and by using medications, self-help strategies, and community supports.

Stigma and fear of discrimination are key barriers that keep many people from seeking help. You can make a difference in the way people see mental illnesses and mental health if you:

- Learn and share the facts about mental health and about people with mental illnesses, especially if you hear or read something that isn't true;
- Treat people with mental illnesses with respect and dignity;
- Support the development of community resources for people with mental illnesses and their friends and family
- Respect the rights of people with mental illnesses and don't discriminate against them when it comes to housing, employment, or education