

Mental Health

A Key Part of Wellness

Good mental health is key to our overall well-being. It is as important as taking care of our physical health. But some people have problems with their mental health. This may make it hard for them to cope with life.

What is a Mental Illness?

A mental health disorder is a medical condition. It may affect a person's feelings or moods. It may make it hard for a person to relate to others. Serious mental illnesses include:

- depression
- anxiety disorders
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- schizophrenia
- bipolar disorder
- eating disorders
- obsessive compulsive disorder

Mental illnesses are real. They are just like other medical conditions. Many factors can cause them. They may include:

- chemical imbalances
- environmental factors
- physical illnesses
- psychological causes
- family history

But sometimes, the cause of a mental illness is not known.

Most mental illnesses can be treated. People with mental health problems need treatment. The support of family and friends can help them get the care they need. Counseling and medication can help.

Myths about Mental Illness

There are a lot of myths about mental illness. Most are not true. Here are a few:

MYTH: People with mental health problems should be able to cope alone.

FACT: Some mental health problems are easier to deal with than others. But many are serious. They may last for weeks. A person with mental health problems that last should see a health care provider.

MYTH: There is little hope if someone has a mental illness.

FACT: There are many good treatments for mental health issues. No one treatment works for all. Treatments work best when based on individual needs.

MYTH: People with mental illnesses live in hospitals.

FACT: Most people with mental illnesses live in the community. They lead full lives. Most who go into the hospital just need help for a short time. They then return home like people with other health issues.

MYTH: People with mental health problems are dangerous.

FACT: An individual with mental illness is not likely to be dangerous. No more than anyone else. A lot of people have mental health issues. Many are active citizens.

MYTH: People with mental health issues cannot hold jobs.

FACT: People with mental illnesses do hold jobs. Many do very hard jobs. They work just as well as others.

Treatment Works!

Mental health conditions can be treated. Treatment options include:

- Psychotherapy – This is counseling with a mental health provider. The goal is to understand a person's feelings. This can help them learn how to cope.
- Medication – This is when drugs are used to adjust brain chemistry. A medical professional prescribes them.
- Combined treatment – This is the use of both psychotherapy and medication.
- Care management – This is when a care manager works closely with an individual. Treatments and services are based on the individual's special needs.
- Peer support – This is help provided by others who have lived with mental health issues. It can be in an individual or group setting.

Contact Your Program for Support

Do you or a family member need help for a mental health problem? There is a provider in your area who can help you. Contact your program by phone or online.

This document is for your information only. It is not meant to give medical advice. It should not be used to replace a visit with a provider. Magellan Health Services does not endorse other resources that may be mentioned here.

Sources: MentalHealth.gov; National Institute of Mental Health; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; National Alliance on Mental Illness; Mental Health America