



Mental Health: Myths & Facts

Can you tell the difference
between a mental health
myth and fact?



Myth: Mental health problems don't affect me.





Fact: Mental health problems are actually very common.

- One in five Canadians will experience a mental health problem this year and one in three will experience it sometime in their life.
- One in 10 young people experienced a period of major depression.
- One in 20 Americans lived with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression.



Fact: Mental health problems are actually very common.

Suicide is the 9th leading cause of death in Canada. 3,500 – 4,000 people die by suicide every year.



Myth: Children don't experience mental health problems.





Fact: Even very young children may show early warning signs of mental health concerns.



- 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.



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





Fact: People with mental health problems are no more likely to be violent than anyone else.



- Most people with mental illness are not violent and only 3%-5% of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness.
- In fact, people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.
- You probably know someone with a mental health problem and don't even realize it, because many people with mental health problems are highly active and productive members of our communities.



Myth: People with mental health needs cannot tolerate the stress of holding down a job.





Fact: People with mental health problems are just as productive as other employees.



Employers who hire people with mental health problems report good attendance and punctuality as well as motivation, good work, and job tenure on par with or greater than other employees.



When employees with mental health problems receive effective treatment, it can result in:

- Lower total medical costs
- Increased productivity
- Lower absenteeism
- Decreased disability costs



Myth: 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

People with mental health problems can get better and many recover completely



Myth: There is no hope for people with mental health problems. He or she will never recover.





Fact: People with mental health problems can get better and many recover completely.



Recovery refers to the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities. There are more treatments, services, and community support systems than ever before, and they work.



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





Fact: Treatment varies on the individual and could include medication, therapy, or both. Many individuals work with a support system during the healing and recovery process



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





Fact: Friends and loved ones can make a big difference. Only 38% 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 by:

- Reaching out and letting them know you are available to help
- Helping them access mental health services
- Learning and sharing the facts about mental health, especially if you hear something that isn't true
- Treating them with respect, just as you would anyone else.
Refusing to define them by their diagnosis or using labels such as "crazy"



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





Fact: Prevention of mental 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.



Promoting the social-emotional well-being of children and youth leads to:

- Higher overall productivity
- Better educational outcomes
- Lower crime rates
- Stronger economies
- Lower health care costs
- Improved quality of life
- Increased lifespan
- Improved family life



Thank you