

# Let's be well

## Moving beyond the stigma of mental illness



Mental health issues are more common than you may realize. According to the most recent statistics:

- One in five American adults experienced a mental health issue
- One in 10 young people experienced a period of major depression
- One in 25 Americans live with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder or major depression

Part of the stigma surrounding mental illness may be the myth that people with mental health problems are violent and unpredictable. Most people with mental illness are not violent and only 3%–5% of violent acts can be attributed to those with a serious mental illness. The truth is, people with severe mental illnesses are more than ten times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.

Mental health problems are not caused by a personality weakness or character flaws. It's not something that someone can be “snapped out of” and many people may need a combination medication, therapy, social support and education to get better. Treatments vary because the contributing factors are wide ranging as well and can include genes, physical illness, injury or brain chemistry; trauma or a history of abuse; or a family history of mental health problems.

**Mental health issues can take many forms, including:**

- **Anxiety disorders** (obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorders, and phobias)
- **Behavioral disorders** (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and Oppositional-Defiant Disorder (ODD))
- **Eating disorders** (anorexia, bulimia and binge eating)
- **Mood disorders** (depression, bipolar disorder, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and self-harm)
- **Personality disorders** (antisocial personality disorder and borderline personality disorder)
- **Psychotic disorders** (such as schizophrenia, which can include hallucinations and delusions)
- **Trauma and stress-related disorders** (PTSD can occur after living through or seeing a traumatic event, such as war, a hurricane, rape, physical abuse or a bad accident)

The more awareness that exists about mental health problems — their prevalence, causes and treatment — the less pervasive the stigma becomes. And that's good news for everyone.

**For more information visit:**

[mentalhealth.gov](http://mentalhealth.gov)

**Text “NAMI” to 741741**

for information and assistance from  
the National Alliance on Mental Illness