UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

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What is Mental Illness

We may know of persons with mental illness. Or even experienced issues with our mental health at some life. But do we truly understand mental illness? How can we help and support persons with mental illness

A mental illness is a disturbance of the mind that impairs the way we think, feel and behave. It affects our daily activities, as well as impact the family members and friends.

Mood and anxiety disorders are the most common mental illnesses. About one in seven Singaporeans have experienced a mood or anxiety some point of their lives[1]. Diagnosis is made through clinical tests and observations.

Despite their prevalence, persons with mental illness still face considerable stigma and discrimination. Many such individuals are thus relucta help and treatment.

Let us look at some common misconceptions associated with mental illness.

Dispelling Common Misconceptions

Myth: Mental illnesses are not real medical illnesses like heart disease and diabetes. People who have them are just "crazy".

Fact: Mental disorders are medical illnesses just like heart disease and diabetes. Research shows there are genetic and biological causes for mental illness, and they can be treated effectively, especially with early detection and intervention.

Myth: Stress causes mental illness.

Fact: The specific causes of mental illness are not yet fully understood. Stress and factors such as genetic predisposition and abnormalities in brain chemicals are possible contributing factors.

Myth: People with mental illness are violent and dangerous.

Fact: People with mental illness are no more violent than the general population. In fact, they are far more likely to be the victims of violence than to be violent themselves.

Myth: People with mental illness are poor and/or less intelligent.

Winston Churchill, Ludwig van Beethoven, Vincent van Gogh and Ernest Hemingway.

Myth: If I have a mental illness, it is a sign of weakness – it's my fault.

Fact: A mental illness is an illness, not a character flaw. It has nothing to do with being weak or lacking will-power. Although people with mental illness can play a big part in their own recovery, they did not choose to become ill.

Myth: People with mental illnesses can't be helped.

Fact: The best treatments for serious mental illnesses today are highly effective. With appropriate medication, psychotherapy and rehabilitation services, most people who live with serious mental illnesses can significantly reduce the impact of their illness and find a satisfying measure of achievement and independence. A key concept is to develop expertise in developing strategies to manage the illness process.

Myth: Mental illnesses are uncommon.

Fact: Four of the 10 leading causes of disability worldwide are mental disorders.

schizophrenia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Ways to Get Help

Take the first step by acknowledging that you may have a mental health condition. This is how you get help and support.

1. Consult a doctor or mental health professional
2. Talk to family members and friends
3. Find support in online forums
4. Join a peer support group
5. Call SAMH Counselling Hotline at 1800 283 7019 (toll-free)

Helping Persons with Mental Illness

You are aware that someone close to you may be suffering from a mental illness. This is how you can lend a helping hand.

1. Learn about the mental illness and its recovery process
2. Listen, and be respectful and supportive
3. Understand the person's perspectives and offer hope
4. Encourage the person to seek and sustain professional treatment
5. Do not dismiss the person's emotions or ignore comments about suicide

Road to Recovery

Recovery is unique to each individual. Some common themes of recovery include:

- Hope
- Having strong relationships with others
- Taking control of one's life
- Accepting responsibility for personal wellness
- Having meaning and purpose in life
- Developing coping strategies

Reference:

1. Institute of Mental Health, 8 December 2018. Latest nationwide study shows 1 in 7 people in Singapore has experienced a mental disorder lifetime Source: https://www.imh.com.sg/Newsroom/News-Releases/Documents/SMHS%202016_Media%20Release_FINAL_web%20uploac

Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety is a normal reaction to stress. It can help a person be better prepared in dealing with a tense situation. But when anxiety becomes overwhelming and interferes with your daily activities, it becomes a disorder.

Mood Disorders

A mood disorder is a lot more than the blues or weathering a rough patch. It is a severe and persistent deterioration of a person's emotional s impairing his ability to function in daily life.

READ MORE

Schizophrenia

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Blk 139 Potong Pasir
Avenue 3, #01-136
Singapore 350139

T: +65 6255 3222
E:
comms@samhealth.org.sg

Toll-Free Helpline
1800-283-7019

IPC REGN. NO. HEF0045/G

Contact Us

Understanding Mental Health

What is Mental Wellness
Coping with Insomnia
Coping with Stress
Managing Mental Health Crisis
The Art of Relaxation

What is Mental Illness
Anxiety Disorders
Depression & Bipolar Disorder
Schizophrenia

Useful Resources
Caregivers for Youth
Road to Resilience

Our Services

Creative Services
SAMH Creative Hub

Outreach
SAMH Communications,
Education & Engagement
SAMH Insight Centre
SAMH Mobile Support Team
COMIT
SAMH SAY-IT! YIT @ East
SAMH C'SAY CREST — Youth

Rehabilitation
SAMH Activity Hub
SAMH Group Homes
SAMH MINDSET Learning Hub
SAMH Oasis Day Centre
SAMH YouthReach

Our Stories

From Clients
Celebrating Hope & Inspiration

From the Community
Celebrating The Resilience Of
The Human Spirit
Celebrating Triumph &
Determination

Media

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Commemorative Books
SAMH 40th Anniversary
Commemorative Book
SAMH 50th Anniversary
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