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URL of this page: https://medlineplus.gov/mentaldisorders.html

# Mental Disorders
**Also called: Mental illness**

## What are mental disorders?

Mental disorders (or mental illnesses) are conditions that affect your thinking, feeling, mood, and behavior. They may happen over a short period of time or come and go. Some can be chronic (long-lasting). They can affect your ability to relate to others and function each day..

## What are some types of mental disorders?

There are many different types of mental disorders. Some common ones include:

- Anxiety disorders [https://medlineplus.gov/anxiety.html] , including panic disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/panicdisorder.html] , obsessive-compulsive disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/obsessivecompulsivedisorder.html] , and phobias [https://medlineplus.gov/phobias.html]
- Depression [https://medlineplus.gov/depression.html] , bipolar disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/bipolardisorder.html] , and other mood disorders [https://medlineplus.gov/mooddisorders.html]
- Eating disorders [https://medlineplus.gov/eatingdisorders.html]
- Personality disorders [https://medlineplus.gov/personalitydisorders.html]
- Post-traumatic stress disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/posttraumaticstressdisorder.html] (PTSD)
- Psychotic disorders [https://medlineplus.gov/psychoticdisorders.html] , including schizophrenia [https://medlineplus.gov/schizophrenia.html]

## What causes mental disorders?

There is no single cause for mental illness. A number of factors can contribute to risk for mental illness, such as:

- Your genes and family history
- Your life experiences, such as stress or a history of abuse, especially if they happen in childhood
- Biological factors such as chemical imbalances in the brain
- A traumatic brain injury [https://medlineplus.gov/traumaticbraininjury.html] (TBI)
- Prenatal (before birth) exposure to viruses [https://medlineplus.gov/infectionsandpregnancy.html] , toxic chemicals [https://medlineplus.gov/reproductivehazards.html] , or other substances [https://medlineplus.gov/pregnancyandsubstanceuse.html] such as alcohol and drugs.
- Use of alcohol [https://medlineplus.gov/alcohol.html] or recreational drugs [https://medlineplus.gov/druguseandaddiction.html]
- Having a serious medical condition like cancer
- Having few friends, and feeling lonely or isolated

Mental disorders are not caused by character flaws. They have nothing to do with being lazy or weak.

## Who is at risk for mental disorders?

Mental disorders are common. Many Americans will be diagnosed with a mental disorder at some time in their life.

**How are mental disorders diagnosed?**

The steps to getting a diagnosis include:

- A medical history
- A physical exam and possibly lab tests, if your provider thinks that other medical conditions could be causing your symptoms
- A psychological evaluation [https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/mental-health-screening/] . You will answer questions about your thinking, feelings, and behaviors.

**What are the treatments for mental disorders?**

Treatment depends on which mental disorder you have and how serious it is. You and your provider will work on a treatment plan just for you. It usually involves some type of therapy. You may also take medicines. Some people also need social support and education on managing their condition.

In some cases, you may need more intensive treatment. You may need to go to a psychiatric hospital. This could be because your mental illness is severe. Or it could be because you are at risk of hurting yourself or someone else. In the hospital, you will get counseling, group discussions, and activities with mental health professionals and other patients.

## Start Here

- Mental Illness [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/syc-20374968?p=1]
(Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/syc-20374968?p=1]

- Warning Signs of Mental Illnesses [https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/warning-signs-of-mental-illness]
(American Psychiatric Association)

## Diagnosis and Tests

- Mental Health Screening [https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/mental-health-screening/] NIH (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/evaluacion-de-salud-mental/]

- Mental Health: What's Normal, What's Not [https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/mental-health/art-20044098?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/mental-health/art-20044098?p=1]

## Treatments and Therapies

- Brain Stimulation Therapies [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/brain-stimulation-therapies/brain-stimulation-therapies] NIH (National Institute of Mental Health)

- How to Choose a Psychologist [https://www.apa.org/topics/psychotherapy/choose-therapist?partner=nlm]
(American Psychological Association)

- Meditation and Mindfulness: What You Need to Know [https://www.nccih.nih.gov/health/meditation-and-mindfulness-effectiveness-and-safety] NIH (National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health)

- Mental Health Medications [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/mental-health-medications] NIH (National Institute of Mental Health)

- Mental Health Providers: Tips on Finding One [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health-providers/ART-20045530?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health-providers/art-20045530?p=1]

- Psychotherapies [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies] NIH (National Institute of Mental Health)

- Technology and the Future of Mental Health Treatment [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/technology-and-the-future-of-mental-health-treatment] NIH (National Institute of Mental Health)

- Therapy and Counseling [https://familydoctor.org/therapy-and-counseling/?adfree=true]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [https://es.familydoctor.org/psicoterapia-cognitiva/?adfree=true]

- What Is Psychiatry? [https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/what-is-psychiatry] 📹 (American Psychiatric Association)

## Living With

- Mental Illness and the Family: Recognizing Warning Signs and How to Cope [https://mhanational.org/resources/recognizing-warning-signs-and-how-to-cope/] (Mental Health America)

- What to Know Before Stopping Medications [https://aapp.org/ed/presentation/patients?view=link-19-1580418376&amp;.pdf] (American Association of Psychiatric Pharmacists) - **PDF**

## Related Issues

- Mental Health: Overcoming the Stigma of Mental Illness [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health/ART-20046477?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/in-depth/mental-health/art-20046477?p=1]

- Psychiatric Advance Directives: Getting Started [https://nrc-pad.org/getting-started/] (National Resource Center on Psychiatric Advance Directives)

- Rural Mental Health [https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/topics/mental-health] (Rural Health Information Hub)

- Tardive Dyskinesia [https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Treatments/Mental-Health-Medications/Tardive-Dyskinesia/] (NAMI)

## Specifics

- Body Dysmorphic Disorder [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/body-dysmorphic-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20353938?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/body-dysmorphic-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20353938?p=1]

- Depersonalization-Derealization Disorder [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depersonalization-derealization-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20352911?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/depersonalization-derealization-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20352911?p=1]

- Dissociative Disorders [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/dissociative-disorders/symptoms-causes/syc-20355215?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/dissociative-disorders/symptoms-causes/syc-20355215?p=1]

- Factitious Disorder [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/factitious-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20356028?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/factitious-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20356028?p=1]

- Functional Neurologic Disorder [https://www.ninds.nih.gov/health-information/disorders/functional-neurologic-disorder] NIH (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.ninds.nih.gov/es/health-information/disorders/trastorno-neurologico-funcional]

- Illness Anxiety Disorder [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/illness-anxiety-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20373782?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/illness-anxiety-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20373782?p=1]

- Intermittent Explosive Disorder [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/intermittent-explosive-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20373921?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/intermittent-explosive-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20373921?p=1]

- Kleptomania [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/kleptomania/symptoms-causes/syc-20364732?p=1] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/kleptomania/symptoms-causes/syc-20364732?p=1]

- Somatic Symptom and Related Disorders [https://familydoctor.org/condition/somatic-symptom-and-related-disorders/?adfree=true] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
  Also in Spanish [https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/trastornos-somatomorfos-es/?adfree=true]

## Genetics

- Perry syndrome: MedlinePlus Genetics [https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/perry-syndrome]
  **NIH**〉 (National Library of Medicine)

## Health Check Tools

- Mental Health Screening Center [https://www.dbsalliance.org/education/mental-health-screening-center/]
  (Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance)

## Statistics and Research

- FastStats: Mental Health [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/mental-health.htm] (National Center for Health Statistics)

- Key Substance Use and Mental Health Indicators in the United States: Results from the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health [https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2023-nsduh-annual-national-report]
  (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)

- Mental Health: Data and Statistics [https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth/data_publications/index.htm]
  (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)

- Mental Illness Statistics [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics] **NIH**〉 (National Institute of Mental Health)

## Clinical Trials

- Clinical Research Trials and You: Questions and Answers [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/clinical-research-trials-and-you-questions-and-answers] **NIH**〉 (National Institute of Mental Health)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/espanol/los-ensayos-de-investigacion-clinica-y-usted-preguntas-y-respuestas]

- Clinical Trials -- Information for Participants [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/trials] **NIH**〉 (National Institute of Mental Health)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/trials/estudios-clinicos-informacion-para-los-participantes]

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Mental Disorders [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Mental+Disorders%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec] **NIH**〉 (National Institutes of Health)

## Journal Articles

**References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)**

- Article: Distress screening in patients with high-grade glioma: diagnostic accuracy in relation...
  [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40745114]

- Article: Housing and Support Intervention and Mortality Among Homeless Adults With Mental...
  [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40742585]

- Article: Implementing work-related Mental-health guidelines in general PRacticE (IMPRovE): findings of a...
  [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40730418]

- Mental Disorders -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Psychiatric+Rehabilitation%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Mental+Disorders%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+AND+%28patient+education+handout%5Bpt%5D+OR+guideline%5Bpt%5D+OR+clinical+trial%5Bpt%5D%29++NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

## Find an Expert

- American Psychiatric Association [https://www.psychiatry.org/]

- Find Your Local NAMI [https://www.nami.org/findsupport/] (NAMI)

- FindTreatment.gov [https://findtreatment.gov/] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration)
  Also in Spanish [https://findtreatment.gov/es]

- Help for Mental Illnesses [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help] **NIH**〉 (National Institute of Mental Health)

Also in Spanish [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help/ayuda-para-la-salud-mental]

- National Institute of Mental Health [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/] NIH⟩
  Also in Spanish [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/espanol]

- Psychologist Locator [https://locator.apa.org/?partner=nlm] (American Psychological Association)

- State by State Info (Psychiatric Advance Directives) [https://nrc-pad.org/states/]
  (National Resource Center on Psychiatric Advance Directives)

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [https://www.samhsa.gov/]

## Children

- Child Mental Health: MedlinePlus Health Topic [https://medlineplus.gov/childmentalhealth.html]
  NIH⟩ (National Library of Medicine)
  Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/childmentalhealth.html]

## Teenagers

- Teen Mental Health: MedlinePlus Health Topic [https://medlineplus.gov/teenmentalhealth.html]
  NIH⟩ (National Library of Medicine)
  Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/teenmentalhealth.html]

## Women

- Women and Mental Health [https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/women-and-mental-health]
  NIH⟩ (National Institute of Mental Health)

## Older Adults

- Older Adult Mental Health [https://medlineplus.gov/olderadultmentalhealth.html] NIH⟩ (National Library of Medicine)
  Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/olderadultmentalhealth.html]

## Patient Handouts

- Adjustment disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000932.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
  Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000932.htm]

- Functional neurological disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000954.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
  Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000954.htm]

- Illness anxiety disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001236.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
  Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001236.htm]

- Somatic symptom disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000955.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
  Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000955.htm]

Adjustment disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000932.htm]

Electroconvulsive therapy [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007474.htm]

Functional neurological disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000954.htm]

Illness anxiety disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001236.htm]

Munchausen syndrome by proxy [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001555.htm]

Somatic symptom disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000955.htm]

## Related Health Topics

Anxiety [https://medlineplus.gov/anxiety.html]

Bipolar Disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/bipolardisorder.html]

Child Mental Health [https://medlineplus.gov/childmentalhealth.html]

Compulsive Gambling [https://medlineplus.gov/compulsivegambling.html]

Delirium [https://medlineplus.gov/delirium.html]

Depression [https://medlineplus.gov/depression.html]

Eating Disorders [https://medlineplus.gov/eatingdisorders.html]

Mental Health [https://medlineplus.gov/mentalhealth.html]

Mood Disorders [https://medlineplus.gov/mooddisorders.html]

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder [https://medlineplus.gov/obsessivecompulsivedisorder.html]

Older Adult Mental Health [https://medlineplus.gov/olderadultmentalhealth.html]

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Psychotic Disorders [https://medlineplus.gov/psychoticdisorders.html]

Schizophrenia [https://medlineplus.gov/schizophrenia.html]

Self-Harm [https://medlineplus.gov/selfharm.html]

Suicide [https://medlineplus.gov/suicide.html]

Teen Mental Health [https://medlineplus.gov/teenmentalhealth.html]

## National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Mental Disorders* is the National Institute of Mental Health [http://www.nimh.nih.gov/]

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