



## Mental Illness: **Myths** and **Facts**

Mental illnesses are common and at the same time often widely misunderstood. People with mental illnesses are frequently discriminated against by others who think it's an uncommon condition and believe in harmful stereotypes. The truth is that mental illness can happen to anybody. Arm yourself with the facts, then use your knowledge to educate others and reach out to those around you with mental illness.

MYTH	FACT
There's no hope for people with mental illnesses.	<b>People can and do recover!</b> There are more treatments, services, and community support systems than ever before, and more are in the works. People with mental illnesses lead active, productive lives.
I can't do anything for a person with mental illness.	<b>You can do a lot</b> , starting with how you act and speak. You can create an environment that builds on people's strengths and promotes understanding. For example, treat people with mental illnesses with respect and dignity, just as you would anybody else.
People with mental illnesses are violent and unpredictable.	Actually, the vast majority of people with mental health conditions are no more violent than anyone else. <b>People with mental illnesses are much more likely to be the victims of crime.</b> You probably know someone with a mental illness and don't even realize it.
Mental illnesses don't affect me.	<b>Mental illnesses affect almost every family in America.</b> Mental illnesses do not discriminate—adults, children, adolescents, the elderly all experience mental health conditions.
Mental illnesses are brought on by a weakness of character.	Mental illnesses are a <b>product of the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors</b> . Social influences, like the loss of a loved one or a job, can also contribute to the development of various mental health problems.
Once people develop mental illnesses, they will never recover.	Studies show that <b>most people with mental illnesses get better, and many recover completely</b> . Recovery refers to the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities. For some individuals, recovery is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life. For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms. Science has shown that hope plays an integral role in an individual's recovery.
Children misbehave or fail in school just to get attention.	<b>Behavior problems can be symptoms of emotional, behavioral, or mental problems</b> , rather than merely attention-seeking devices. Children can succeed in school with appropriate understanding, attention, and mental health services.