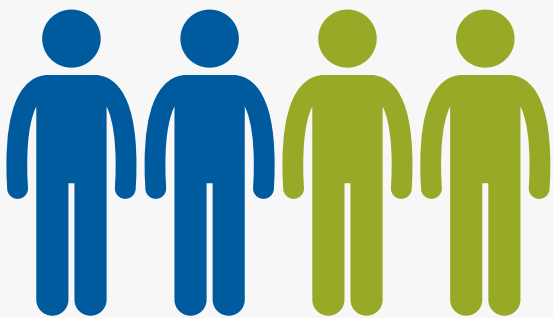


Facts Not Stigma



What Mental Illness Looks Like...



Because of media biases and stigmas, we all have assumptions about what someone with a mental illness looks like; this is an inaccurate perspective.

50% of people will have a mental illness at some point before the age of 40, showing there isn't one way the mental illness presents or looks like. Mental illness begins to look like all of us, and we can start seeing the wide variation mental illness has.

Break the BIAS

Many times we are oblivious to the mental challenges of those around us, because it doesn't match the restricted criteria that we have placed on what mental illness looks like.



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Mental Illness and Violence

People with a mental illness are, on average,

10x

more likely to be victims of violence, than those without a mental illness.

Mental illness has been used as a scapegoat to avoid having conversations around why violence happens, which is a much more complex conversation than a simple diagnosis (poverty, social environment, personal history of violence, situational factors, etc)

Choose
kindness

Often times, people who experience a mental illness are extremely kind and compassionate individuals, because they don't want anyone else to struggle like they do.



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Stigmatizing Language (Crazy, Insane, Nuts, etc)

These words can be harmful for individuals who struggle with mental illness. These are used as shaming words and create a negative way of viewing people with mental illness.



In fact, historically, these words were used as a way to marginalize those with mental illnesses and even justify systemic injustice towards them.

Don't Label People

Labeling people is never compassionate and reduces a person to their diagnosis.

Practice: Instead of saying "they are a mentally ill person," try saying "this is a person experiencing a mental illness."

Diagnosis; Not Adjective

Avoid using mental health diagnosis as an adjective. (ex. "he/she is being bipolar")

Practice: Instead try being more accurate by saying, "he/she seems to be experiencing a lot of different emotions."



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Causes of Mental Illness

Unfortunately, some individuals believe having a mental illness means that you are lazy/weak, which is false.

In fact, individuals who struggle with a mental illness are often quite strong, as they are constantly struggling with the hardships that come with mental illness.

Understanding why someone has a mental illness is extremely complex and most times is a result of many different factors.

There is not one specific cause for mental illness but we do know that some factors can increase your chances.

These include:

- Genetics- Family history of mental illness
- Biology- Certain illness and other biological factors
- Environment- Stressful Home life, etc...
- Lifestyle- Unhealthy habits (smoking) and poor relationships



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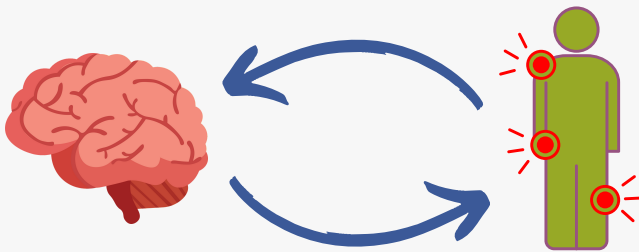
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Mental Illness is Not Just in Your Head

Many people think that mental illness is only the result of psychology or personal beliefs, but mental illness has many different biological roots.



Mental illnesses can physically change the structure of your brain. For example, in **depression**, certain areas of the brain shrink in size.

Anxiety is deeply rooted in our bodies' fight or flight response, which is also called the stress response. This causes cortisol (the stress hormone) to flood the blood stream, which causes many biological changes.



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