



MENTAL HEALTH FACT SHEET

We all experience different levels of mental health throughout our lives. In fact, half of us will deal with some type of mental health challenge over the course of our lifetime. Unfortunately, sometimes these challenges can become more serious and require more attention. However, there is good news. Recovery is also common and we can all do something to help.

We all want support systems that can help us through challenges, like supportive relationships and safe living environments. Sometimes we have these support systems, and sometimes we don't. Many of us will also experience life challenges like problems at home, at school, or relationship issues. Regardless of what situation you may find yourself in – in wellness or not – there is help available.

Educational Videos:

- Mental Health Continuum: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G7pw6AjlBOU&feature=youtu.be>
- Mental Illness & Stigma: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Kk-4KsTefA&feature=youtu.be>
- Mental Health Conditions: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_i6BHqEihdY&feature=youtu.be

MENTAL HEALTH QUICK FACTS



75%

Percentage of all mental illnesses that start by the age of 24.

Source:
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)



6 - 8 years

Amount of time young people wait from onset of symptoms before getting help.

Source:
JAMA Psychiatry, 2005



70% - 90%

Percentage of Individuals reporting improved quality of life after receiving support and treatment.

Source:
NAMI California

² National Institute for Mental Health, *Mental Illness Exacts Heavy Toll-Beginning in Youth*, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/news/science-news/2005/mental-illness-exacts-heavy-toll-beginning-in-youth.shtml>, (May 2013)



What is Stigma?

In order to understand the reasons behind why people wait so long to receive help for mental health needs, it's important to understand the concept of stigma. Research tells us that the largest barrier to reaching out for mental health needs is stigma.

- Stigma is a way of thinking that says that certain people are less deserving of our respect.
- Stigma comes from negative and incorrect beliefs, or stereotypes, about groups of people.
- Fear of being left out or picked on because of who you are is stigma.
- The effects of stigma can make you feel sad, ashamed or alone.

Stigma can be seen in the attitudes of those around us toward mental illness, but also in the way we judge our own challenges with this issue. Stigma can be found in numerous places and there are many types of stigma:

Self-stigma: refers to attitudes and beliefs within yourself.

- For example, someone who is experiencing mental illness may think that they are unable to live a fulfilling life because of their condition.

Public stigma: refers to the attitudes and beliefs of the general public towards persons with mental health challenges or their family members.

- For example, the public may assume that people with psychiatric conditions are violent and dangerous.

Institutional stigma: refers to an organization's policies or culture of negative attitudes and beliefs.

- For example, stigma is often reflected in the use of clinical terms, such as a "schizophrenic." It is preferable to use "people first" language, such as "a person experiencing schizophrenia."

People with mental health challenges often experience stigma. They get called names by those around them who don't understand what they are going through. These labels are based on stereotypes, not on facts, and they represent stigma – a fear and lack of knowledge that stops people from speaking up about their needs, that keeps them suffering in silence.

Besides the obvious problems of feeling isolated and alone that stigma can create, it can also delay the time in which someone gets help. This delay can lead to worsening of all the problems associated with stigma, further taunting, and increasing mental health challenges.

It's our responsibility to strike down stigma wherever we find it. You can help break down stigma by learning more and sharing the truth about mental health through your film. You can help us end the silence.