

MENTAL HEALTH

MYTHS

VS

FACTS

MYTH

Kids can't get depression and anxiety disorders, only adults can.

MYTH

Kids only get a mental illness because they have bad parents.

MYTH

Mental illness is the same as being mentally disabled (sometimes incorrectly called mental retardation).

MYTH

Having a mental illness means you're a wimp who can't handle life.

MYTH

People with mental health challenges have to take special tests to get a job or go to college.

MYTH

People with mental illnesses have trouble handling school work, a job, and daily tasks.

FACT

Mental illness is not caused by doing something wrong. Also, you can't cause someone else to have a mental illness. Doctors think that mental illness is caused by a mix of what's going on in your body and what's happening around you.

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FACT

Mental illness has nothing to do with how smart you are. A mental disability is a **cognitive disability** which means it's a different journey with different challenges. It's still important to treat all people with respect, because you don't know what life is like in their shoes.

FACT

Your personality or ability to handle your feelings does not cause mental illness. Mental illness isn't just "in your head" or something that goes away if you try hard. The right combination of what helps is different for each person. Once they find something that helps them, most people with a mental illness live healthy, full lives.

FACT

People with mental health challenges don't have to take special tests to go to college, get a house, or get a job. They can work and learn and do all the things people without mental health challenges can do.

FACT

It is common for all people to sometimes have trouble at school, at home, at jobs and feel sometimes like they don't know what to do. No matter what, it's good to talk to others and learn what works best for you. What helps you calm down? What makes you happy and what makes you sad? Knowing these things will help you find a way to do well in school and life.

Adapted from the Walk in Our Shoes initiative



Directing Change
Program & Film Contest



Funded by counties through the voter-approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63).

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FACTS

MYTH

If you have a mental illness, it will be harder to get an apartment or house once you grow up and you won't be able to live on your own.

MYTH

When people have mental illnesses, they will never get better.

MYTH

Talking about your mental health challenge is a waste of time. It's better to just take medicine.

MYTH

People with a mental illness are dangerous and violent.

MYTH

Mental illness is more common in some racial groups than others.

MYTH

I can't help someone with a mental illness. Only a doctor can.

FACT

All mental illnesses are different, but being diagnosed with one will not keep you from being able to grow up, learn how to take care of yourself, and get an apartment or house like everyone else.

FACT

People diagnosed with mental illnesses can get better. Every illness is different. Some people feel better when they talk to someone, like a friend or a doctor, or take medication. Most people need help from friends and family to talk and figure out how to live with their illness. Not all people have to take medicine or see a therapist for the rest of their lives.

FACT

If you have a broken leg, it will not get better with just aspirin. It also takes time and exercise and hard work. In a way, having a mental illness is the same. You have to be patient, get help, and talk about it – and you'll start to feel better, too.

FACT

Most people diagnosed with mental illnesses are not violent. Most violence in the world is not caused by people with mental illnesses. In fact, a person with a mental illness is more likely to be the one who gets hurt or bullied by someone else.

FACT

Mental illness can happen to anyone. It doesn't matter what you look like, where you live or where you are from.

FACT

You can help people who have a mental illness. Don't call people words like "crazy" or "mental." If you know people with mental health challenges, try to get to know them and notice their talents and skills, not just their illness. Learn about mental wellness and share it with others. If you hear something that isn't true, don't be afraid to speak up and talk about what is true.

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