



# Mental Health *Matters*

*If we see signs of a serious physical illness in friends or family, we encourage them to get help as soon as possible. With mental health issues, myths and misunderstandings often stand in the way of people getting the help they need.*

We can be uncomfortable when faced with psychological pain. We dismiss it as temporary. We are reluctant to interfere. Or sometimes, we just don't know what to do. Imagine how many people would suffer needless health complications if we never suggested medical care at troubling early signs of physical problems.

People who experience mental health problems are often the last to know. Help often doesn't happen without the intervention of a loved one. Don't be afraid to reach out if someone you know needs help.

We shouldn't try to diagnose a mental illness any more than we should try to diagnose a physical illness, but there are actions that can help. The first step is learning more about mental health. See our sidebar for common indicators that a person may need help.

If you or a loved one experiences some of these symptoms, why not talk to a counselor? As the Member of an EAP, you have that option available for you and for your immediate family members. Learn more at your EAP self-help website or call the number below 24/7/365. For people who don't have access to an EAP, encourage them to seek help with their clergy, a physician, or a local social service agency.

## Mental Health Myths and Reality

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|----------------|---|
| <b>Myth</b>    | <b>Mental health issues are not all that common.</b>  |
| <b>Reality</b> | One in five adults will experience a mental health issue this year.   |
| <b>Myth</b>    | <b>He or she is too young; it's just adolescence.</b>   |
| <b>Reality</b> | One half of all mental illness begins by age 14 and 75% begins by age 24.   |
| <b>Myth</b>    | <b>People with mental health issues are dangerous.</b>  |
| <b>Reality</b> | People with mental health issues are more likely to be victims of violence. Only 3%-5% of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness. |

## Signs that Might Indicate a Need for Help

- Mood swings
- Dramatic highs and lows
- Confused thinking
- Problems with concentration, memory, or logical thought
- Feelings of paranoia
- Being suspicious, irritable, or anxious
- Withdrawal from social contact
- Loss of interest in favorite activities
- Dramatic changes in sleeping or eating patterns
- Decline in personal care
- Seeing or hearing things
- Substance abuse
- Talk of suicide or suicide attempts



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