

ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, mental illnesses are medical conditions that disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Mental illnesses often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life. Serious mental illnesses include major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder.

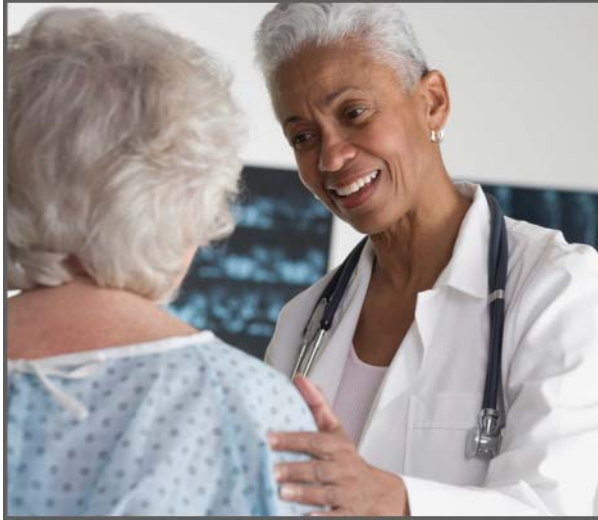
Mental illnesses are treatable. Most people diagnosed with a serious mental illness can experience relief from their symptoms by actively participating in an individual treatment plan. In addition to medication treatment, psychosocial treatment such as cognitive behavioral therapy, interpersonal therapy, peer support groups and other community services can also be components of a treatment plan and assist with recovery. The availability of transportation, diet, exercise, sleep, friends and meaningful paid or volunteer activities contribute to overall health and wellness, including mental illness recovery.¹⁵

According to the 2008 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, which is administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 13.4% of adults in the U.S. received treatment for a mental health problem in either inpatient or outpatient settings.¹⁶

Caring for people with mental health disorders

The following are some suggestions to improve communication with individuals who have a mental health disorder.

- Avoid using words like "crazy," "wacko," or "loony."
- Do not define a person by his/her diagnosis but treat each person as an individual.
- Ask a person what makes him/her most comfortable and accommodate needs to the greatest extent possible.
- Create an environment that builds on people's strengths and promotes understanding.
- Try to keep a situation as stress-free as possible.
- Stay calm and supportive in a crisis situation. Ask the person how you can assist and try to identify who his/her support person/system is so you can involve them for help.¹⁷



Resources

Delaware Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health
 Herman M. Holloway, Sr. Campus
 1901 North DuPont Highway
 Main Building
 New Castle, DE 19720
 302-255-9399 Phone
 302-255-4428 Fax
 800-652-2929 Crisis Intervention only
<http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dsamh/>

Contact Lifeline in Delaware
 P.O. Box 9525
 Wilmington, DE 19809
 302-761-9100 Phone
 800-262-9800 Toll Free in Kent and Sussex
 302-761-9700 Deaf Helpline (TDD)
 302-761-9800 Administrative Office
 302-761-4280 Fax
<http://www.contactlifeline.org>

National Alliance on Mental Health in Delaware
 2400 West 4th Street
 Wilmington, DE 19805
 888-427-2643 Toll Free
 302-427-2075 Fax
<http://www.namidelaware.org>

Mental Health Association in Delaware
 100 West 10th Street, Suite 600
 Wilmington, DE 19801
 302-654-6833 or 800-287-6423 Phone
 302-654-6838 Fax
<http://www.mhainde.org>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
 SAMHSA's Health Information Network
 P.O. Box 2345
 Rockville, MD 20847
 877-726-4727 Phone
 800-487-4889 TTY
 240-221-4292 Fax
<http://www.samhsa.gov>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
 800-273-8255 Phone
 888-628-9454 Spanish
 800-799-4889 TTY
<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

¹⁵ National Alliance on Mental Illness. What is Mental Illness: Mental Illness Facts. Retrieved from http://www.nami.org/template.cfm?section=about_mental_illness

¹⁶ National Institute of Mental Health. Use of Mental Health Services and Treatment Among Adults. Retrieved from http://www.nimh.nih.gov/statistics/3USE_MT_ADULT.shtml

¹⁷ Partially adapted from United Spinal Association, Disability Etiquette: Tips on Interacting with People with Disabilities (2008). Jackson Heights, NY.