

Mental Health and Mental Illness



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SCHIZOPHRENIA
SOCIETY OF ONTARIO
A REASON TO HOPE – THE MEANS TO COPE

Objectives



- Know the facts
- Know the warning signs
- Know how to help
- Know where to get help

Test Your Knowledge (True or False)



1. 1 in 5 people will experience a mental illness in their lifetime.
2. A person who has a parent with a mental illness is more likely to develop a mental illness.
3. Mental illness begins during adolescence.
4. Drug use causes mental illness.
5. People with a mental illness are more violent and dangerous.
6. With the right tools, you can talk someone out of a delusion.
7. The only cure for schizophrenia is the right medication.

Mental Illness



- **Mental illness** is a real illness of the brain producing disturbance in thoughts and emotions, making it difficult to cope with the challenges of everyday life.
- Mental illness can happen to anyone, no matter what their age, culture, education or income.
- Mental illness is a valid medical condition that deserves the same care, support and compassion as any other illness.

Warning Signs Can Include



- Anxiety or fear that does not go away
- Frequent crying and weepiness
- Loss of interest in activities that were a source of pleasure in the past, like team sports or school activities
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lack of energy or motivation
- Problems at school with falling marks
- Withdrawal from family, friends, and school activities
- Increased school absences
- Loss or increase in appetite
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Increased irritability, anger, or aggression
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Frequent stomachaches or headaches
- Increased alcohol or drug use
- Flat affect

Types of Mental Illnesses



- **Mood Disorders**

- Major depressive disorder, Bipolar disorder

- **Anxiety Disorders**

- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Phobias

- **Psychotic Disorders**

- Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder, Psychosis

- **Eating Disorders**

- **Personality Disorders**

- Antisocial Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder

- **Substance Use Disorders**

Youth and Mental Illness



Anxiety disorders are the most common of all the mental illnesses we may encounter with youth

Other illnesses emerging during the school years include:

- Impulse Control disorders (e.g. ADHD)
- Mood disorders (e.g. Depression)
- Substance use disorders (e.g. Alcoholism)
- Psychosis (e.g. Schizophrenia)

When left untreated...



mental health problems can lead to:

- school failures
- underemployment
- family conflicts
- drug & alcohol abuse
- violence
- suicide

Stigma



- Defined as shame and disgrace
- Stereotype
- Based on myths and misunderstanding
- Results in discrimination
- Negative and hurtful
- Prevents help-seeking
- Prevents helpfulness
- Results in dismissing early warning signs

Canadian Stigma Stats



- 46% believe people use the term *mental illness* as an excuse for bad behaviour; and 1 in 10 think people with a mental illness should “snap out of it”
- 1 in 4 are fearful of being around those who suffer from a serious mental illness
- 50% would tell others that they have a family member with a mental illness; Compare this to 68% for diabetes and 72% for cancer
- 61% would be unlikely to go to a family doctor with a mental illness. Similarly, 58% would not hire a lawyer, child-care worker or financial advisor with a mental illness
- 49% would not socialize with someone with a serious mental illness
- 1 in 9 think depression is not a mental illness

The Good News...



About 60% of Canadians agree that the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness is under funded, and 72% agree it should be on a par with funding for diseases such as cancer and diabetes.

Barriers to Employment



- Lack of Treatment
- Lack of Insight- Anosognosia
- Financial – risking eligibility of ODSP, LTD
- Employer Stigma; Self Stigma
- Side effects of medication
- Gap in work experience
- Perceived lack of skills
- Persistent symptoms

Support Strategies



- Reduce stigma; create a culture of acceptance
- Talk about mental illness and suicide
- Know what to look for and gather information
- Share observations with parents or support staff
- Make youth feel safe to talk
- Ask questions and listen to the answers
- Clarify limits of confidentiality (abuse, harm to self or others)

Resiliency



Children who are resilient are able to bounce back from difficult situations.

Adults can help children become more resilient by increasing their protective factors:

- Focus on what is strong, rather than what is wrong
- Reflect on and celebrate strengths
- Encourage connectedness to school life
- Be a caring adult in students' lives
- Role model self-care
- Help increase social networks

Community Resources



- **Contact Hamilton - access to children and youth mental health services 905-570-8888**
- **COAST (Crisis Outreach and Support Team) Child & Youth Program 905-972-8338**
- **Alternatives for Youth 905-527-4469**
- **Schizophrenia Society of Ontario, Family Support 905-777-9921**
- **Settlement and Integration Services Organization, Children's Mental Health Outreach Program 905-667-7476**
- **The Cleghorn Program 905-540-6586**

In-School Supports



- Staff who has Mental Health First Aid certificate or has experience helping
- Social Worker
- Public Health Nurse
- Guidance Counselor
- Vice Principal

For Further Learning



- **Mental Health First Aid** – dwaligora@cogeco.ca
- Living Works: **suicideTALK, safeTALK and ASIST**- Visit spcch.org and click “training”
- **TAPE Institute**: intensive mental health and addictions training – tapestudies.com
- **FREE Mental Health and Addiction online course**:
http://www.camh.net/education/Online_courses_webinars/mha101/index.html