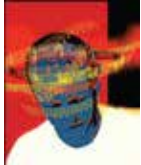


## What is Mental Illness

### SCHIZOPHRENIA



Everyone has moments of being out of touch but can generally recognize the lapses and refocus. However, individuals with schizophrenia may experience:

- Delusions - false ideas (such as belief that they are someone famous)
- Hallucinations - seeing, hearing, tasting, feeling or smelling things that do not exist

Delusions and hallucinations are very real for the person and impact how they think & act.

Schizophrenia is **NOT** a split personality or multiple personality disorder.

## Road to Recovery

### All mental illnesses can be treated!

Common treatments for mental illnesses are medication and counselling. The majority of treatment occurs within the community.

Outcomes (recovery) from mental illnesses vary based on a number of factors:



- Specific illness diagnosis
- When intervention & treatment begins (early help improves recovery)
- Access to and following a treatment plan
- Personal strengths, coping skills
- Social environment and supports (family, peer and community support aid recovery)

## Barriers to Getting Help

Common myths about mental illness prevent many people from asking for help. It is very important to know that mental illnesses are:

**NOT** a sign of weakness or personal failure

**NOT** the result of sin or lack of faith

**NOT** an indication of violent behaviour

**NOT** a reflection of intelligence or ability

Mental illnesses are treatable ..... early help and support improves recovery and minimizes negative affects of illness on day to day life.

## Resource and Supports

### Crisis Assessment and Support Team

(CAST) provides 24/7 mental health crisis support for people aged 16 and older.

**1-866-487-CAST (2278)**



### Child and Youth Crisis Service

Haldimand-Norfolk REACH

24/7 service for children, youth and their families who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

**1-866-327-3224**

Visit your physician for support or for referral to a psychiatrist or mental health counsellor.

Pamphlet provided with support from:



For additional information or pamphlets contact:  
Community Addiction and Mental Health Services

**Wellness & Recovery Centre 1-877-909-4357 x2**

# Understanding MENTAL ILLNESS



Family, friend, co-worker, neighbour,  
community leaders, yourself

**Mental illness can affect ....**

# ANYONE



Community Addiction and Mental Health Services of Haldimand and Norfolk

**Achieve Mental Health  
Wellness & Recovery Centre**

Dedicated to the enhancement of our community through the provision of addiction and mental health services that promote and support wellness.

## What is Mental Illness

Mental illnesses are medical conditions which occur when an individual experiences an ongoing change or disturbance in how they feel, act, think or perceive which causes distress or disability.

Mental illness is **not a choice** individuals make ... they are experiencing changes in their perceptions that they themselves may not understand ... the nature of the illness is that these changes impact day to day living without the person being able to explain or understand why.



Individuals cannot simply 'pull up their socks' or 'get over it', they require medical care and treatment.

## Causes

Like physical illness, mental illnesses have different origins and causes. Some illnesses may have more than one contributing cause.

**Genetics** - risk of certain illnesses increases when a family history of the illness exists.



**Biology** - abnormal function of brain systems or excess or lack of certain brain chemicals can be a trigger.

**Environmental** - substances such as cannabis, alcohol or caffeine can trigger the onset of mental illness in vulnerable people.

**Social influences** - abuse, neglect, bullying, or other negative life experiences can trigger the onset of mental illness in vulnerable people.

## Mental Illness

### ANXIETY DISORDERS

Everyone lives with some anxieties or fears but when the level of fear or anxiety rises and negatively affects day to day function it may be classified as an anxiety disorder.

Categories of anxiety disorders include:

- Specific phobias
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
- Social Anxiety Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Anxiety disorders affect 12% of people.

### PERSONALITY DISORDERS

There are quirks in every personality but when characteristics are fixed, rigid, extreme and prominent they may reflect a person has a personality disorder. People with a personality disorder tend to have a hard time getting along with others, struggle to understand themselves and others and may become irritable, hostile, demanding, fearful or manipulative.



The rate of personality disorders is unclear as those living with a disorder often do not seek treatment. They generally do not perceive that the issue is with themselves but believe that the fault lies with others.

Borderline Personality Disorder can be especially challenging for those supporting the individual. Family and friends often refer to their interactions with the person as 'walking on eggshells'.

## Mental Illness

### MOOD DISORDERS

Periods of ups and downs or the blues affect everyone but when an individual has changes in their mood (lows or highs) that occur frequently, seem to occur without cause or explanation, last longer, or are more intense they may be experiencing a mood disorder.

Mood disorders include:

- Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD)
- Postpartum Depression



Depression causes people to lose pleasure from daily life, can complicate other medical conditions, and can even be serious enough to lead to suicide.

Mood disorders affect 10% of people.

### EATING DISORDERS



Body weight or size concern many people but when attention to food, exercise and weight drives all a person's daily activities and takes all their attention and energy, they may have an eating disorder.

Eating disorders include:

- Anorexia Nervosa
- Bulimia Nervosa
- Exercise Bulimia
- Binge Eating Disorder

Eating disorders affect 3% of people.

Men and women are both affected by eating disorders.

# Mental Illness can affect .... Anyone