

# Myths and Facts



**Myth:** People living with a mental illness can never recover

**Fact:** Recovery from mental illness is possible - it is not the absence of illness but a person's ability to take control of their illness, to live life to their full potential. The four major dimensions that are essential to life in recovery are:

**Health** - manage one's disease as well as live in a physically and emotionally healthy way

**Home** - have a stable and safe place to live

**Purpose** - engage in meaningful daily activities such as a job, school, hobbies, or volunteering

**Community** - maintain relationships and networks that provide support, friendship, love and hope

**Myth:** People living with a mental illness just take from society, they make no contribution

**Fact:** People with a mental illness do achieve, contribute and enhance their communities - some examples of those having made a difference ...



Jim Carrey, Patty Duke - entertainment

Clara Hughes, Ron Ellis - sports

John Nash (Nobel Prize) - science

Senator R. Dallaire - Canadian military, senate

Margaret Trudeau, Winston Churchill - political

The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that *"misunderstanding and stigma surrounding mental illness are widespread. Despite effective treatments for mental disorders, there is a belief that they are untreatable or that people with mental disorders are difficult, not intelligent, or incapable of making decisions. This stigma can lead to abuse, rejection and isolation and exclude people from health care or support."*

## Learn the Facts

For general information visit the Mental Health & Wellness Collection at the Norfolk County Public Library, Simcoe branch or visit [www.ncpl.ca](http://www.ncpl.ca) for books, videos and DVDs on mental illness/health, addiction and recovery.



Reviewed and recommended web sites:

- [www.anxietycanada.ca](http://www.anxietycanada.ca)
- [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)
- [www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)
- [www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca](http://www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca)
- [www.nedic.ca](http://www.nedic.ca)
- [www.mooddisorderscanada.ca](http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca)
- [www.problemgambling.ca](http://www.problemgambling.ca)
- [www.ptsdassociation.com](http://www.ptsdassociation.com)
- [www.schizophrenia.on.ca](http://www.schizophrenia.on.ca)
- [www.suicideprevention.ca](http://www.suicideprevention.ca)



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**

# Challenging the MYTHS

of mental illness



Mental illness myths discourage people from seeking necessary help and support

Myths are the foundation for stigma and discrimination

## Learn the Facts... Challenge the Myths



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.

# 1 in 5 people live with a mental illness

Mental illnesses are medical conditions that 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 can affect ANYONE**

There are many types of mental illness:

## Anxiety Disorders:

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

## Eating Disorders:

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



## Mood Disorders:

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

## Personality Disorders

## Schizophrenia

## Myths and Facts



Historically, mental illness has not been a topic of conversation and if discussed, was carried out in hushed whispers of fear and shame. Our ideas and beliefs about mental illness have frequently been the result of portrayals in popular media or news headlines. The portrayals, however, often represent the stereotypes or myths associated with mental illness and are not based on facts.

Enhancing knowledge about mental illness and challenging the myths is vital as misinformation can have many negative results:

- Individuals in need of help are reluctant to seek help
- Access to services is denied or compromised
- Family and personal relationships are strained
- Limited expectations, opportunities for those living with a mental illness
- Individuals with an illness deal with stigma, discrimination

**Myth:** People with mental illness are violent.

**Fact:** The majority of people living with mental illness are not violent. When violence occurs, it typically is for the same reasons as in the general public.....feeling threatened or the excessive use of drugs and/or alcohol.

## Myths and Facts



**Myth:** Mental illnesses are not real they are....

- An excuse for poor behaviour
- The outcome of poor parenting
- Punishment for evil behaviour (possession by spirits, or a curse)

**Fact:** Mental illnesses are medical conditions with genetic and biological causes - social and environmental factors may trigger the onset of mental illness in vulnerable individuals.

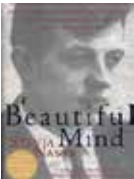
**Myth:** People with a mental illness just need to snap out of it, or 'pull it together.'



**Fact:** Mental illnesses are medical illnesses. They are not a sign of personal weakness or just laziness. Mental illnesses are not the outcome of choices made by an individual.

**Myth:** People living with a mental illness are less intelligent.

**Fact:** Mental illnesses are not developmental or intellectual disabilities. Individuals with varying intellectual abilities have been diagnosed with a mental illness. John Forbes Nash, a Nobel Prize winner, lives with schizophrenia.



Individuals living with a developmental disorder can also be living, at the same time, with a mental illness - this is considered a dual diagnosis.

# Learn the Facts... Challenge the Myths