

Mental Health Basics: Types of Mental Illness, Diagnosis, Treatment, and More

What Is Mental Health?

Mental health refers to your emotional and psychological well-being. Having good mental health helps you lead a relatively happy and healthy life. It helps you demonstrate resilience and the ability to cope in the face of life's adversities.

Your mental health can be influenced by a variety of factors, including life events or even your genetics.

There are many strategies that can help you establish and keep good mental health. These can include:

- keeping a positive attitude
- staying physically active
- helping other people
- getting enough sleep
- eating a healthy diet
- asking for professional help with your mental health if you need it
- socializing with people whom you enjoy spending time with
- forming and using effective coping skills to deal with your problems

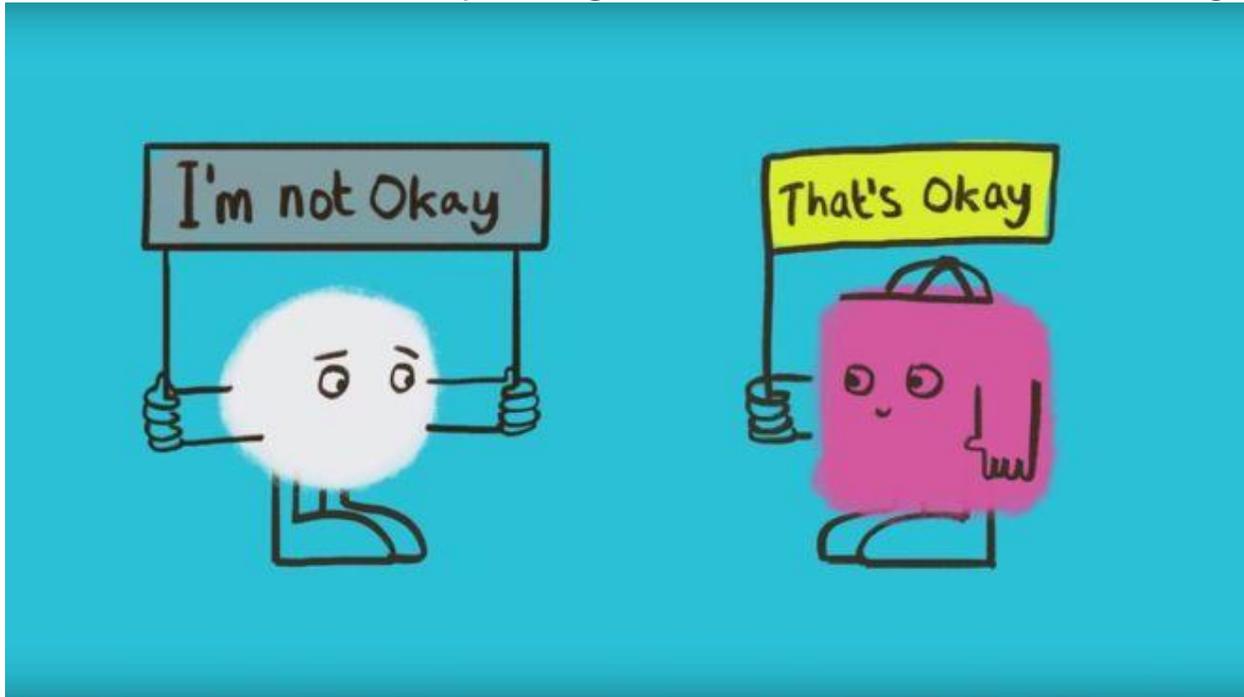
What is mental illness?

A mental illness is a broad term which encompasses a wide variety of conditions which affect the way you feel and think. It can also affect your ability to get through day-to-day life. Mental illnesses can be influenced by several different factors, including:

- genetics
- environment
- daily habits
- biology

Mental health disorders

The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) helps mental health professionals diagnose mental illnesses. There are many types of mental health disorders. In fact, almost 300 different conditions are listed in DSM-5.



These are some of the most common mental illnesses affecting:

Bipolar disorder

Bipolar disorder is a chronic mental illness that affects about 2.6 percent of Americans each year. It is characterized by episodes of energetic, manic highs and extreme, sometimes depressive lows.

These can affect a person's energy level and ability to think reasonably. Mood swings caused by bipolar disorder are much more severe than the small ups and downs most people experience on a daily basis.

Persistent depressive disorder

Persistent depressive disorder is a chronic type of depression. It is also known as dysthymia. While dysthymic depression isn't intense, it can interfere with daily life. People with this condition experience symptoms for at least two years.

About 1.5 percent of American adults experience dysthymia each year.

Generalized anxiety disorder

Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) goes beyond regular everyday anxiety, like being nervous before a presentation. It causes a person to become extremely worried about many things, even when there's little or no reason to worry.

Those with GAD may feel very nervous about getting through the day. They may think things won't ever work in their favor. Sometimes worrying can keep people with GAD from accomplishing everyday tasks and chores. GAD affects about 3 percent of Americans every year.

Major depressive disorder

Major depressive disorder (MDD) causes feelings of extreme sadness or hopelessness that lasts for at least two weeks. This condition is also called clinical depression.

People with MDD may become so upset about their lives that they think about or try to commit suicide. About 7 percent of Americans experience at least one major depressive episode each year.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) causes constant and repetitive thoughts, or obsessions. These thoughts happen with unnecessary and unreasonable desires to carry out certain behaviors, or compulsions.

Many people with OCD realize that their thoughts and actions are unreasonable, yet they cannot stop them. More than 2 percent of Americans are diagnosed with OCD at some point in their lifetime.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental illness that's triggered after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Experiences that can cause PTSD can range from extreme events, like war and national disasters, to verbal or physical abuse.

Symptoms of PTSD may include flashbacks or being easily startled. It's estimated that 3.5 percent of American adults experience PTSD.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia impairs a person's perception of reality and the world around them. It interferes with their connection to other people. It's a serious condition that needs treatment.

They might experience hallucinations, have delusions, and hear voices. These can potentially put them in a dangerous situation if left untreated. It's estimated that 1 percent of the American population experiences schizophrenia.

Social anxiety disorder

Social anxiety disorder, sometimes called social phobia, causes an extreme fear of social situations. People with social anxiety may become very nervous about being around other people. They may feel like they're being judged.

This can make it hard to meet new people and attend social gatherings. Approximately 15 million adults in the United States experience social anxiety each year.

