

Mental Health: Myths and Reality

There are many myths about mental health in society. Here are the five most common myths based on US government data:

Myth: Mental health issues don't affect me.

Fact: Mental health problems are quite common.

In 2020:

- One in five adults in America experienced mental health problems;
- Every sixth young person has experienced an episode of severe depression;
- One in 20 Americans lives with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or severe depression.

Myth: Children do not suffer from mental health problems.

Fact: Even a very young child can show early signs of mental health problems. Often these problems can be diagnosed clinically. These problems may be caused by a combination of biological, psychological and social factors.

Half of mental health disorders first show signs before the age of 14, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of mental health disorders begin before the age of 24.

Unfortunately, only half of children and adolescents diagnosed with mental health problems receive the treatment they need. Early mental health support is important to prevent mental health problems from hindering other developmental needs.

Myth: People with mental health problems are aggressive and unpredictable.

Fact: The vast majority of people with mental health problems are no more prone to violence than anyone else. Only 3%-5% of the violence is committed by people who have serious mental problems. In fact, people with mental disorders themselves are 10 times more vulnerable to violence than other members of society. You probably know someone who suffers from mental health problems, but you don't realize it, because people with mental health problems are very active and productive members of our society.

Myth: People with mental health needs, even those who manage their own mental illness, are vulnerable to work-related stress.

Fact: People with mental health are just as productive as other workers. Employers who work with people with mental health problems emphasize their systematic attendance at work, punctuality, motivation, diligent work as or better than other employees.

In the case of effective treatment of an employee with mental health problems:

- Medical expenses are reduced;
- Productivity is increased;
- The number of missed days is low;
- Disability costs are reduced.

Myth: Mental health problems are caused by personal weakness or character flaws.

Fact: Mental health problems have nothing to do with laziness or weakness. Many people need the right help to get better. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genetics, physical illnesses and physical injuries, or chemical processes in the brain;
- Life experiences such as psychological trauma or harassment;
- Family history of mental problems.

People with mental health problems can recover partially or completely.

Source: <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/mental-health-myths-facts>