



## DISPEL THE MYTHS

Here are some of the common myths along with the helpful facts that prove them wrong!

**MYTH:** Teenagers don't suffer from "real" mental illnesses; they are just moody.

**FACT:** One in ten children and adolescents suffer from mental illness. Most severe mental illnesses start in the teenage years.

**MYTH:** Talk about suicide is an idle threat that need not be taken seriously.

**FACT:** Ninety percent or more of all suicide victims have a mental illness and/or a substance abuse problem. For people ages 15-24, suicide is the third leading cause of death.

**MYTH:** Mental health problems are really the result of poor parenting and lack of discipline in the home.

**FACT:** Mental illnesses are often inherited from one generation to another and generally have little or nothing to do with parenting. They can also be caused by problems during pregnancy or by head trauma.

**MYTH:** Mental illnesses are not real and cannot be treated.

**FACT:** Mental disorders are diagnosed in the same way as asthma, diabetes and cancer. Treatments of mental illness are effective 60%-80% of the time. This rate meets or exceeds success rates for cutting edge treatment for heart disease.

**MYTH:** We're good people. Mental illness doesn't happen to me and my family.

**FACT:** One in four Americans will suffer at some point from a mental health problem. These Americans are from ALL backgrounds. There is no way to predict who will develop a mental illness.

**MYTH:** Depression (aka "the blues") is a normal part of life that can be overcome without seeking treatment.

**FACT:** Major depression is a real, treatable illness that affects 50% of adult Americans every year. It is the leading cause of disability for those between ages 15-44 in the United States.

**MYTH:** Private health insurance routinely does not cover mental health services.

**FACT:** Well over 90% of companies with health insurance cover some mental health care.

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**MYTH:** Stay away from people with mental illness because they're violent.

**FACT:** Virtually every study shows that persons with mental disorders are no more violent than other Americans, assuming that they don't abuse alcohol or illegal drugs and are receiving treatment. More often, mentally ill people are victims of violence, stigma and discrimination.

**MYTH:** There is no hope for people with mental illness.

**FACT:** Mental illnesses are successfully treated at a higher rate than many other chronic health conditions, particularly when treated early.

This list was compiled by The National Mental Health Awareness Campaign, an organization dedicated to reducing stigma associated with mental illnesses. Replacing wrong ideas with facts helps young people come out of the darkness of isolation into the light of treatment and wellness.