

Warning Signs of Mental Illness

Trying to tell the difference between what expected behaviors are and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn't always easy. There's no easy test that can let someone know if there is mental illness or if actions and thoughts might be typical behaviors of a person or the result of a physical illness.

Each illness has its own set of symptoms but some common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following.

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality (“lack of insight”)
- Abuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing “aches and pains”)
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance (mostly in adolescents)

Mental health conditions can also begin to develop in young children. Because they're still learning how to identify and talk about thoughts and emotions, their most obvious symptoms are behavioral. Symptoms in children may include:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety, for instance fighting to avoid bed or school
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums

Where to Get Help

Don't be afraid to reach out if you or someone you know needs help. Learning all you can about mental health is an important first step. **For help, call Asian Pacific Counseling & Treatment Centers:**

APCTC

Main Center: 520 S. Lafayette Park Place #300, LA, CA 90057
Alhambra Center: 1635 W. Main St. #100, Alhambra, CA 91801
Wilshire Center: 600 St. Paul Ave. #101, LA, CA 90017
SFV Center: 15350 Sherman Way #200, Van Nuys CA 91406
Cerritos Center: 11050 E. Artesia Blvd. #F, Cerritos, CA 90703

Adults/Children Services	(213) 252-2100
Adults/Children Services	(626) 248-1800
Adults/Older Adults Services	(213) 483-3000
Adults/Children Services	(818) 267-1100
Adults/Children Services	(562) 860-8838

www.apctc.org

MYTHS & FACTS: The Stigma of Mental Illness and Resulting Discrimination

MYTHS	FACTS
<p>Mental illness is something that only happens to “other people.”</p>	<p>One in 5 California adults report needing help with a mental or emotional health problem. Approximately 9 million children in the U.S. have serious emotional problems, but only 1 in 5 of these children is receiving appropriate treatment. Children and adults alike experience a variety of mental health issues, from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder to post-partum depression to bipolar disorder.</p>
<p>Mental illness can’t be treated, you’re ill for life.</p>	<p>Not only is treatment available, but full recovery is possible. Today we are learning how to prevent mental illness and promote mental wellness. With support and treatment, between 70 and 90 percent of individuals have a significant reduction in symptoms and improved quality of life.ⁱⁱⁱ</p>
<p>My son/daughter is acting out, but that’s just part of being a kid.</p>	<p>Research shows that half of all mental disorders start by age 14 and three-quarters start by age 24. But, an average of 6 to 8 years pass after the onset of mood disorder symptoms – 9 to 23 years for anxiety disorder symptoms – before young people get help.</p>
<p>People who have been diagnosed with mental illnesses are dangerous and should be avoided.</p>	<p>Mental illness accounts for, at most, 3 percent of all violence committed in the U.S.^{vi} People with serious mental health challenges are more likely to be victims of violence than perpetrators. More than 25 percent of people with severe mental illness report being victims of a violent crime within a given year, a rate nearly 12 times higher than that of the general population.^{vii}</p>
<p>I don’t discriminate against people who are diagnosed with a mental illness, but I don’t want to work or live near them.</p>	<p>In addition to being unfair and ethically unacceptable, it is also illegal to deny someone any rights due to their real or perceived mental illness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 made it illegal for employers or public services to discriminate against someone living with a mental illness. • The Fair Housing Act (Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968) made it illegal for landlords or other real-estate entities to discriminate against someone living with a mental illness.
<p>I’m not a psychiatrist, I can’t make a difference for a person living with a mental health challenge.</p>	<p>Many people say that stigma and discrimination can be a bigger challenge to their quality of life than their mental health challenges are. You can help to end stigma by openly accepting people who are diagnosed with a mental illness in your work and in your community. You are in a unique position to give people who are living with mental health challenges what they, just like anyone else, truly deserve – a job, a lease, a public service or simply a respectful conversation – that helps them live a full and productive life.</p>

Funded by the voter approved Mental Health Services Act (Prop. 63).

