



October 4 - October 10

1 in 5 adults in the United States experience mental illness each year.¹ Despite the large number of adults affected by a mental health condition, there is still stigma and misunderstanding about mental illness. The first week of October is dedicated to raise awareness about mental illnesses, fight stigma, and educate our communities. In this infographic, HARC aims to provide information on common mental health conditions, early symptoms, tips to help someone living with a mental illness, and Coachella Valley data.

About Mental Health Conditions

A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood.² These conditions impact day-to-day living and can affect one's relationship with others. However, a mental illness is not always visible and many people decide to keep it to themselves. Anyone can have a mental illness without you knowing. Below are some of the common mental health conditions:

Anxiety

There are several types of anxiety disorders and they all share one thing in common: persistent, excessive fear or worry in situations that are not threatening.²



Depression

Depressive disorder is more than just feeling sad. Depression symptoms are different for everyone but some of the most common are:

- Changes in sleep and/or appetite²
- Loss of energy²
- Lack of interest in activities²
- Suicidal thoughts²



PTSD

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a condition that can occur after a traumatic event such as an accident, assault, military combat or natural disaster.²

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder causes dramatic shifts in a person's mood, energy and ability to think clearly.²

Eating Disorders

Eating disorders such as anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder can lead to serious and fatal health complications.²



Psychosis

Psychosis is characterized as disruptions to a person's thoughts and perceptions that make it difficult for them to recognize what is real and what isn't. Disruptions are experienced as seeing, hearing and believing things that aren't real.²

ADHD

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.² Although ADHD is most commonly diagnosed in young people, this condition does not only affect children.

Symptoms of a Mental Illness

Trying to understand symptoms and signs of a mental illness is not easy as each condition has its own symptoms. However, below are a couple of common symptoms that may help:

For Adults:

- Excessive worrying or fear³
- Feeling extremely sad or low³
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria³
- Overuse of substances like alcohol³ or drugs³
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress³
- Thinking about suicide³



For Children:

- Changes in school performance³
- Frequent temper tantrums³
- Frequent disobedience or aggression³
- Frequent nightmares³
- Excessive worry or anxiety³
- Hyperactive behavior³



If you or your child are experiencing any of these symptoms, reach out to your primary care provider to discuss.

Common Misconceptions

- **Not everyone who struggles with a mental illness can be cured.** For some people, their condition may be a life-long disease. Therefore, you cannot expect a sudden recovery and it would be inappropriate to ask, “do you still have a mental illness?”
- **Even if a mental illness may not be cured, it can often be managed.** A mental health condition may be managed through several forms such as medication or therapy and coping strategies. People can still live active, fulfilling lives.
- **Each person's experience with mental illness is unique.** The treatment that works for one person does not always work for another person; the brain is a tricky thing. Do not assume that if a particular medication worked for you, it will work for your friend with the same illness.
- **Mental illness is not something that people can just “get over it”.** Many people mistakenly believe that mental illness can be overcome by sheer willpower, which is not true. If you would not tell someone with cancer to “get over it”, you shouldn’t tell someone with mental illness to “get over it” either.

Being Kind Goes a Long Way!



The people you interact with on a daily basis might have a mental illness that you are unaware of. They may not be comfortable sharing the details with you, but just by being kind and understanding of any behavioral “quirks” you are helping. For example:

- Someone may clean their space compulsively as a symptom of a mental illness, but if that doesn’t hurt anyone, don’t call attention to their behavior.
- Someone with depression may neglect aspects of their personal appearance. Again, if it doesn’t hurt anyone, don’t call attention to their behavior—just be kind and understanding.

Mental Illness in the Coachella Valley



In the Coachella Valley, one in four adults (28.6%) have been diagnosed with one or more mental health disorders.⁴



14.2% of adults have been diagnosed with depression⁴

12.4% of adults have been diagnosed with anxiety⁴

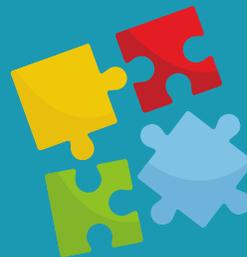
9.3% of adults have been diagnosed with PTSD⁴



4.5% of adults have been diagnosed with a phobia⁴

4.5% of adults had suicide ideation⁴

In the Coachella Valley, 18.5% of children (ages 3-17) have been diagnosed with one or more mental health disorders.



7.4% of children have been diagnosed with ADD/ADHD⁴

5.3% of children have been diagnosed with a developmental delay⁴

2.0% of children have been diagnosed with an eating disorder⁴



Helping Someone who is Struggling with a Mental Illness

TO HELP:

- Genuinely express your concern.⁵
- Show respect and understanding for how they describe and interpret their symptoms.⁵
- Be a good listener and responsive.⁵ Make eye contact with a caring approach.
- It may also be the case where the person may not want to talk at all. That is OK. Just greeting them and being kind makes a difference.⁵

AVOID:

- Criticizing, blaming or raising your voice.⁵
- Talking too much, too rapidly, or too loudly. Silence and pauses are OK.⁵
- Showing any form of hostility.⁵
- Assuming things about the person or their situation.⁵
- Being sarcastic or making jokes about their condition.⁵

Want to learn more about how to help others going through a mental health crisis? Get training in mental health first aid for free!

For details, visit <https://up2riverside.org/help-others/get-trained/>

A Personal Message from our CEO

Dear reader,

This infographic has a special importance to me, because I am one of the millions of people who lives with a mental illness. I have anxiety disorder, and fortunately, with the help of my healthcare provider, I've found a medication that makes it manageable for me.



If someone says, "I am mentally ill", too often we think of someone in a straightjacket. But mentally ill people can be many things—including the CEO of a successful nonprofit.

I was initially hesitant to share my diagnosis in such a public manner, worried that people might view me as less competent or unfit for my job. But then I realized that reluctance to share is part of the problem with how we talk about mental illness. I wouldn't hesitate to tell someone "I'm nearsighted, so I wear contacts" or "I have diabetes, which is why I have an insulin pump". So why am I hesitant to say I have anxiety and am managing it with medication? The answer is stigma. I hope this example and my personal story will encourage you to see mental illness differently, and to understand that we are so much more than just a diagnosis.

Sincerely,
Jenna LeComte-Hinely

Sources:

1. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/cbhsq-reports/NSDUHNationalFindingsReport2018/NSDUHNationalFindingsReport2018.pdf>
2. <https://www.nami.org/Learn-More/Mental-Health-Conditions>
3. <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Warning-Signs-and-Symptoms>
4. Coachella Valley Community Health Survey. (2019). HARC. Available online at: <https://harcdata.org/coachella-valley-community-health-survey/executive-report/>
5. <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/NAMI-FaithNet/Tips-For-How-to-Help-a-Person-with-Mental-Illness>

For more resources,
please visit:

[HARCdata.org](https://harcdata.org)

