

## DE-STIGMA-TIZE with the Facts About Mental Health Issues

**Myth:** Mental health issues are rare.

**Fact:** Mental health issues are not rare and affect nearly everyone either directly or indirectly.

**Myth:** People with mental health issues are unable to lead productive lives.

**Fact:** Most people with a mental health issue respond to treatment, learn to cope with and manage their problems, and go on to lead productive and fulfilling lives.

**Myth:** People who have mental health conditions will not get better.

**Fact:** Once diagnosed, mental health issues are treatable. While they are not always cured, they can be managed effectively. Most people with mental health conditions live productive and positive lives while receiving treatments for their mental health issues. As is the case with any illness, individuals with severe or persistent mental health conditions who respond poorly to available treatments may require more support and may not function as highly as others.

**Myth:** People with serious mental health issues are violent and unpredictable.

**Fact:** While some people who suffer from serious mental health issues do commit antisocial acts, mental health issues do not equal criminality or violence - despite the media's tendency to emphasize a suspected link. People with mental health issues are no more likely to commit violence than anyone in the general public, but they are more likely to be victimized and are more likely to inflict violent behaviors on themselves.

**Myth:** Mental health issues happen because of bad parenting or personal weakness.

**Fact:** The main risk factors for mental health issues are not bad parenting or personal weakness but rather genetics, severe and prolonged stress (such as physical or sexual abuse), or other environmental influences (such as birth trauma or head injury).

**Myth:** Treatments for mental health issues are not usually effective.

**Fact:** The effectiveness of any treatment depends on a number of factors including the type of mental health issue and the particular needs of the individual. A combination of psychiatric medication and psychotherapy, or social interventions is the most effective way to treat mental health issues.

**Myth:** Mental health conditions are caused by everyday stressors.

**Fact:** It may seem that stress is responsible for mental health conditions; however, there is no one clear cause of mental health issues. Rather, it is a result of complex interactions between psychological, biological, genetic, and social factors. Stress, stigma, and lack of support can make it worse on the individual.

**Myth:** Mental health issues are always hereditary.

**Fact:** Some mental health issues include a genetic component, which results in a predisposition or vulnerability toward the mental health problems among children and siblings, but environment also plays a key role in the development of certain conditions. If someone in one's family has a mental health condition, that person will be a higher risk.