

MENTAL ILLNESS



Learn More

For additional information on **mental illness** visit the Canadian Mental Health Association: www.cmha.ca



Canadian Men's Health Foundation

www.menshealthfoundation.ca
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WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Talk to a Doctor

If you believe you or someone you know is showing symptoms of a mental illness, talk to your family doctor first. If necessary, he or she can refer you to a specialist resource – such as a psychiatrist, a mental health clinic at a hospital or a community health centre. The treatment will depend on the specifics of the mental illness.

MENTAL ILLNESS: WHAT IS IT?

Know the Facts

Just like physical illnesses, mental illnesses can take a wide variety of forms. They affect different people in different ways. The good news is that all mental illnesses are treatable. This brochure will give an introduction to some of the various types of mental illness that can affect men.



TYPES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders can include a number of conditions. Phobias are one type of anxiety disorder, where the person has an unreasonable fear of certain objects, animals or situations. Another is panic disorders, where the person has repeated and intense episodes of fear combined with physical symptoms such as difficulty breathing. Obsessive-compulsive disorder is another type, where the person cannot stop a certain repeated action or thought.

Most often, the various anxiety disorders are treated with counselling or medication.



TYPES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Personality Disorders

There are many types of personality disorders, each one with its own medical name. In general, people with these disorders have a hard time getting along with other people. They have difficulty understanding themselves and others, which may make them irritable, demanding, hostile, fearful or manipulative. The symptoms vary from one type of personality disorder to another.

Personality disorders are among the most difficult forms of mental illness to treat. Often, people with these disorders don't seek help because they are able to function in their day-to-day lives. They may blame others as the source of dysfunction in their relationships rather than considering that the problem is within themselves. Professional counselling, therapy and medication are the most effective treatments.

Organic Brain Disorders

Organic brain disorders are the result of a disease or direct injury to the brain. They affect about 1% of people and include Alzheimer's disease, AIDS dementia complex (caused by the HIV virus damaging the brain) and brain damage from strokes or accidents.

Treatment for organic brain disorders usually involves rehabilitation programs.

TYPES OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Schizophrenia

Contrary to what a lot of people believe, schizophrenia isn't about having a "split personality." Rather, it is a serious mental illness that affects about 1% of Canadians. The most common symptoms include mixed-up thoughts, delusions, hallucinations, and bizarre behaviour.

Some people have just one episode of these symptoms in their lives; others have a difficult time functioning in daily life because their symptoms are so frequent. Anti-psychotic medications are the main treatment for schizophrenia, as well as counselling and programs that help people manage the symptoms.

Depression & Manic Depression

Together, depression and manic depression are known as mood disorders and affect about 10% of the population. Mood disorders cause people to experience more extreme (and longer-lasting) emotional "highs and lows" than normal.

Symptoms of depression include feelings of hopelessness, changes in eating patterns, disturbed sleep, constant fatigue, an inability to have fun, or even thoughts of suicide. People with manic depression can have these same symptoms, plus occasional "highs" that can cause reckless behaviour.

DID YOU KNOW:

Nearly 30% of people with substance abuse problems also suffer from depression.

