

Mental Illness – Talk About It

Mental illness has emerged as one of Canada's leading public health problems. It does not develop as a result of a personal failure or weakness. Gender, age, family status and race are not determining factors.



A few quick facts:

- Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some point in their lives either through family, friends, co-workers or personal experience
- 1 in 5 Albertans will develop a mental illness
- 90% of people experiencing depression do not seek treatment
- Mental disorders in youth are ranked as the second highest hospital care expenditure in Canada, surpassed only by injuries
- Only 1 out of 5 children who need mental illness assistance receives it
- 7 out of 10 Canadians with depression are actively in the workforce
- Symptoms of mental illness strike 30% of Canadians between ages 24 and 44
- People with a mental illness took an average of 40 days off during the past 2 years and were 7 times more likely to report decreased effectiveness at work

The stigma:

- Mental illness is an illness just like any other medical condition
- Only 1 in 8 individuals affected receives proper medical management – a situation which would not be tolerated in the management of heart attacks or cancer
- 79% of workers said they thought that someone diagnosed with depression would keep it a secret to avoid hurting their career opportunities
- While mental illness is treatable, more than half of those affected do not seek treatment due to shame, stigma or lack of information
- 72% of individuals with a mental health problem received no mental health care over the course of a year, but 80% of these had visited their family physician

Getting help:

- 80% of people who are depressed respond well to treatment
- 78% of people who have a strong sense of community connection also report good mental health
- Most people with mental illness recover and are able to lead productive and fulfilling lives with the appropriate treatment and support

Additional information on mental illness can be found on-line at
www.virtualwellness.ualberta.ca



Assistance for Staff
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Phone: 780.492.7124
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Assistance for Students
University Wellness Services
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