

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH



MAY 2021

STATISTICS

- 1-in-5 American adult experience some form of mental illness every given year.
- The average delay between symptom onset and treatment is 11 years.
- About 2-in-5 people who are incarcerated have a history of mental illness.
- Suicide is the leading cause of death for people held in jails

CAUSES

- Research suggests multiple causes, such as genetics, environment, lifestyle, and traumatic events influence whether someone develops a mental health condition
- Biochemical processes and circuits, and basic brain structure may play a role
- A traumatic brain injury
- A mother's exposure to viruses or toxic chemicals while pregnant
- Use of alcohol or recreational drugs
- Having a serious medical condition like cancer
- Having few friends, and feeling lonely or isolated



DIAGNOSES

- A medical professional determines a diagnosis by interviewing about symptoms. As well, doctors will sometimes obtain medical tests to rule out other ailments.
- A psychological evaluation. You will answer questions about your thinking, feelings, and behaviors.



SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Child

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for two or more weeks
- Seriously trying to harm or kill himself
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart or fast breathing
- Involved in multiple fights, using a weapon, or wanting badly to hurt others
- Severe, out-of-control behavior that can hurt himself or others
- Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to make herself lose weight
- Intensive worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still that puts her in physical danger or causes school failure
- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships

Children can develop some of the same conditions as adults.



SPECIFIC CONDITIONS DEVELOPED DURING CHILDHOOD

- **Avoidant-Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID):** resistance to eat specific foods due to a negative response to the color, texture, or smell; and out of fear of becoming sick or choking
- **PICA:** ingestion of non- edible substances (wire, clay, ice, dirt, sand, stones) for at least one month. Most common in developmentally disabled individuals
- **Pediatric bipolar disorder:** extreme shifts in mood that can result in a high, known as a manic episode, or a low, known as a depressive episode. Most likely to develop during late teen years.
- **Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder (DMDD):** a child is chronically irritable and experiences frequent, severe temper outbursts that seem out of proportion to the situation at hand.
- **Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD):** developmental condition of inattention and distractibility, with or without accompanying hyperactivity.
- **Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD):** a recurrent pattern of angry/irritable mood, argumentative/defiant behavior or vindictiveness toward authority figures lasting at least six months
- **Separation anxiety disorder (SAD):** characterized by persistent and excessive anxiety during impending separation from the primary caretaker.

TREATMENT



- Treatment depends on which mental disorder you have and how serious it is. You and your provider will work on a treatment plan just for you. It usually involves some type of therapy. You may also take medicines. Some people also need social support and education on managing their condition.
- In some cases, you may need more intensive treatment. You may need to go to a psychiatric hospital. This could be because your mental illness is severe. Or it could be because you are at risk of hurting yourself or someone else. In the hospital, you will get counseling, group discussions, and activities with mental health professionals and other patients.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS



Notice when you're fighting against reality. The first step in accepting reality is gaining awareness that you're resisting it. It may seem like this would be easy to spot, but there are actually a lot of subtle ways that people push against reality. If you're feeling bitter or resentful, wishing things were different or thinking about how life isn't fair, you might be fighting reality.



Remind yourself that you can't change what has already happened. Before you can make peace with reality, you have to acknowledge that there's no going back to the way things were. Doing this may be challenging and painful, but by identifying what you can and can't control, you can turn your energy towards coping with the things you can't change.



Relax your body. If you're feeling stressed or are pushing against the reality of your situation, there's a good chance your body is tense. This is often associated with resistance and keeps your mind on high alert. Physically relaxing your body can help you feel more ready to accept what is reality. Try yoga, taking a hot bath or shower, deep breathing exercises, or getting a massage to help you relax.



Pretend that you're accepting reality. Even if you're still struggling to fully accept reality, think about what it would look like if you did. How would you act if you simply accepted things as they are? What would your next step be? Changing your behaviors and actions to reflect "pretend acceptance" can help you to actually shift your thoughts.

APPS

- Racing thoughts and ruminations are hallmarks of anxiety, but you can slow down, breathe deeply using the *Nature Sounds Relax and Sleep app*



- You know those fidget cubes with all the little tools and gadgets on them to keep you distracted? Imagine a whole app full of these little fun distractions: Download it via Play Store: *AntiStress Anxiety app*.

