

Understanding Mental Illness

How to Help



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Our Day!

- What is a Mental Disorder?
- Prevalence of Mental Disorders in the U.S.
- What is “Severe & Persistent Mental Illness”?
- How to Help With....
 - Depression/Anxiety Disorders
 - Psychosis—(Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder)
 - Substance Use Disorders
- Recovery from Mental Illness
- Resources in Lexington



Why Do We Need to Learn about Mental Health Problems?

- Mental health problems are common.
- Stigma is associated with mental health problems.
- Many people are not well informed about mental health problems.
- Professional help is not always on hand.
- People often do not know how to respond.
- People with mental health problems often do not seek help.



What Is a Mental Disorder?

A **mental disorder** or **mental illness** is a **diagnosable** illness that:

- + Affects a person's thinking, emotional state, and behavior
- + Disrupts the person's ability to
 - Work
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships



The Impact of Mental Illness

- Mental illnesses can be more disabling than many chronic physical illnesses. For example:
 - The disability from moderate depression is similar to the impact from relapsing multiple sclerosis, severe asthma, or chronic hepatitis B.
 - The disability from severe post-traumatic stress disorder is comparable to the disability from paraplegia.
- “*Disability*” refers to the amount of disruption a health problem causes to a person’s ability to:
 - Work
 - Carry out daily activities
 - Engage in satisfying relationships

U.S. Adults with a Mental Disorder in Any One Year

Type of Mental Disorder	% Adults
Anxiety disorder	18.1
Major depressive disorder	6.7
Substance use disorder	3.8
Bipolar disorder	2.6
Eating disorders	2.1
Schizophrenia	1.1
Any mental disorder	26.2

Mental Health First Aid



The Action Plan

- + **A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- + **L**isten nonjudgmentally
- + **G**ive reassurance and information
- + **E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- + **E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies



What Is Depression?



- Major depressive disorder lasts for at least 2 weeks and affects a person's
 - Emotions, thinking, behavior, and physical well-being
 - Ability to work and have satisfying relationships

Signs and Symptoms of Depression

Emotions

- Sadness, anxiety, guilt, anger, mood swings, lack of emotional responsiveness, feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, irritability

Thoughts

- Frequent self-criticism, self-blame, pessimism, impaired memory and concentration, indecisiveness and confusion, tendency to believe others see one in a negative light, thoughts of death and suicide

Signs and Symptoms of Depression

Behaviors

Crying spells, withdrawal from others, neglect of responsibilities, loss of interest in personal appearance, loss of motivation, slow movement, use of drugs and alcohol

Physical

Fatigue, lack of energy, sleeping too much or too little, overeating or loss of appetite, constipation, weight loss or gain, headaches, irregular menstrual cycle, loss of sexual desire, unexplained aches and pains

Assess for Risk of Suicide or Harm

The most common crises to assess for with depressive symptoms are

- Suicidal thoughts and behaviors
- Nonsuicidal self-injury

Suicide Risk Assessment

- **Gender**
- **Age**
- **Chronic physical illness**
- **Mental illness**
- **Use of alcohol or other substances**
- **Less social support**
- **Previous attempt**
- **Organized plan**

Warning Signs of Suicide

- Threatening to hurt or kill oneself
- Seeking access to means
- Talking or writing about death, dying, or suicide
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling worthless or a lack of purpose
- Acting recklessly or engaging in risky activities
- Feeling trapped
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family, friends, or society
- Demonstrating rage and anger or seeking revenge
- Appearing agitated
- Having a dramatic change in mood



Questions to Ask

Ask the person directly whether he or she is suicidal:

- “Are you having thoughts of suicide?”
- “Are you thinking about killing yourself?”

Ask the person whether he or she has a plan:

- “Have you decided how you are going to kill yourself?”
- “Have you decided when you would do it?”
- “Have you collected the things you need to carry out your plan?”



How to Talk with a Person Who Is Suicidal

- Discuss your observations with the person
- Ask the question without dread
- Do not express a negative judgment
- Appear confident, as this can be reassuring

Check For Two Other Risks

- Has the person been using alcohol or other drugs?
- Has he or she made a suicide attempt in the past?

How to Help

- Let the person know you are concerned and are willing to help
- Express empathy for what the person is going through
- Encourage the person to do most of the talking
- State that thoughts of suicide are often associated with a treatable mental disorder
- Tell the person that thoughts of suicide are common and do not have to be acted on



Keeping the Person Safe

- Provide a safety contact number that is available at all times
- Help the person think about people or things that have been supportive in the past
- Find out whether those supports are still available

Do Not

- Leave an actively suicidal person alone
- Use guilt and threats to try to prevent suicide
 - *You will go to hell*
 - *You will ruin other people's lives if you die by suicide*
- Agree to keep their plan a secret



Keeping the Person Safe

- Mental health professionals always advocate seeking professional help for someone who has suicidal thoughts
- The person may be very reluctant to involve a professional helper
- Try to involve the person in the decision making about what should be done, who should be told, and how to seek professional help
- If the person has a weapon or is behaving aggressively, call law enforcement



BiPolar Disorder



- Bipolar disorder is a mental disorder that causes people to have episodes of severe high and low moods. People who have this illness switch from feeling overly happy and energized to feeling very sad and vice versa.

Characteristics of Mania

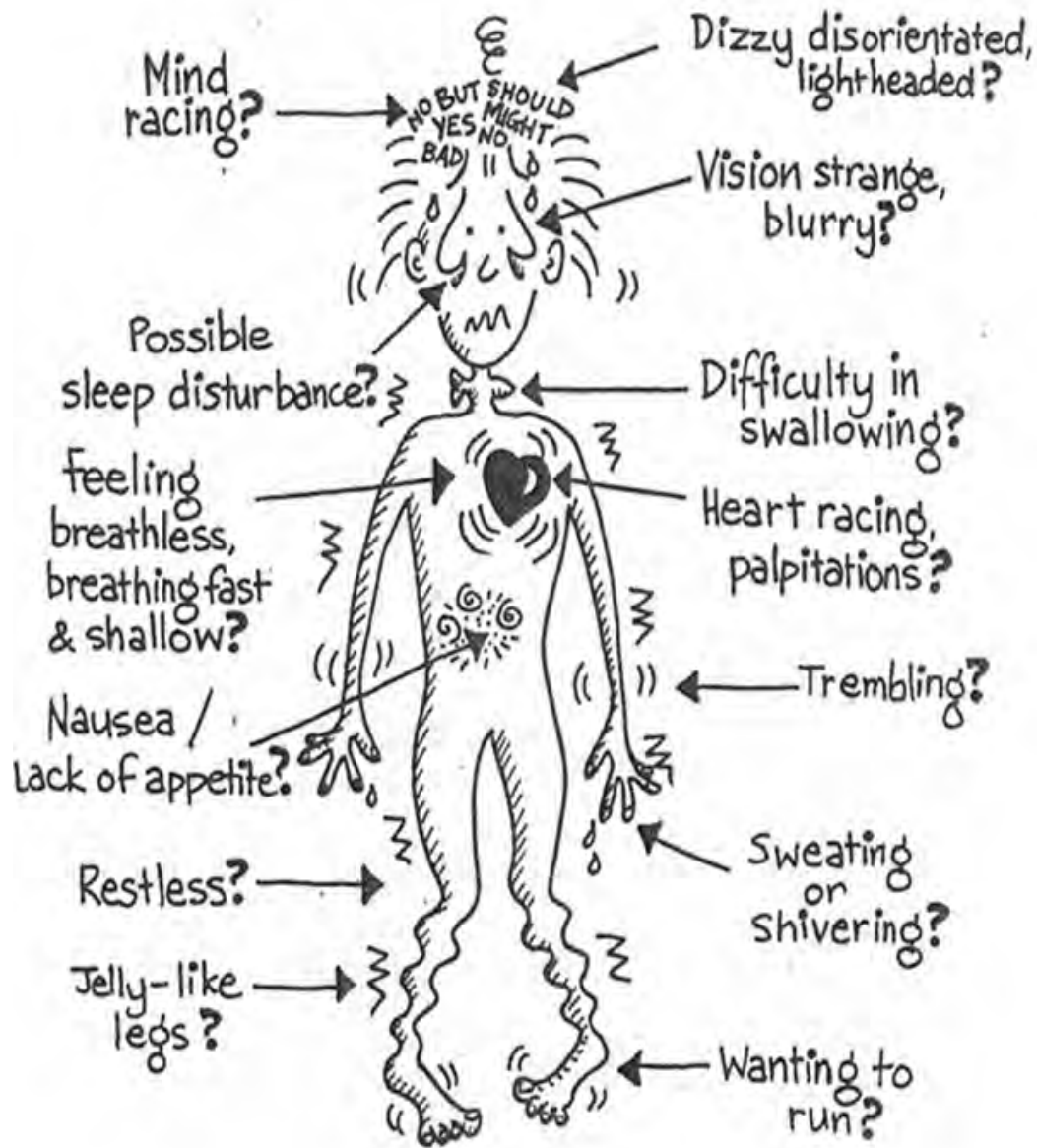
- Increased energy and over activity
- Elated mood
- Need less sleep than usual
- Irritability
- Rapid thinking and speech
- Lack of inhibitions
- Grandiose delusions
- Lack of insight

What Are Anxiety Disorders?



- An anxiety disorder differs from normal stress and anxiety.
- An anxiety disorder is more severe, lasts longer and interferes with work and relationships.





U.S. Adults with an Anxiety Disorder in Any One Year

Type of Anxiety Disorder	% Adults
Specific phobia	8.7
Social phobia	6.8
Post-traumatic stress disorder	3.5
Generalized anxiety disorder	3.1
Panic disorder	2.7
Obsessive-compulsive disorder	1.0
Agoraphobia (without panic)	0.8
Any anxiety disorder	18.1

Symptoms of a Panic Attack

- Palpitations, pounding heart, or rapid heart rate
- Sweating
- Trembling and shaking
- Shortness of breath, sensations of choking or smothering
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Abdominal distress or nausea
- Dizziness, light-headedness, feeling faint, unsteady
- Feelings of unreality
- Feelings of being detached from oneself
- Fear of losing control or going crazy
- Fear of dying
- Numbness or tingling
- Chills or hot flashes

How to Help

- Let the person know you are concerned and willing to help
- Ask the person whether he or she knows what has happened

If **you don't know** it is a panic attack or other medical problem:

- Check for a medical alert bracelet and follow the instructions
- Seek medical assistance

If **the person believes** it is a panic attack:

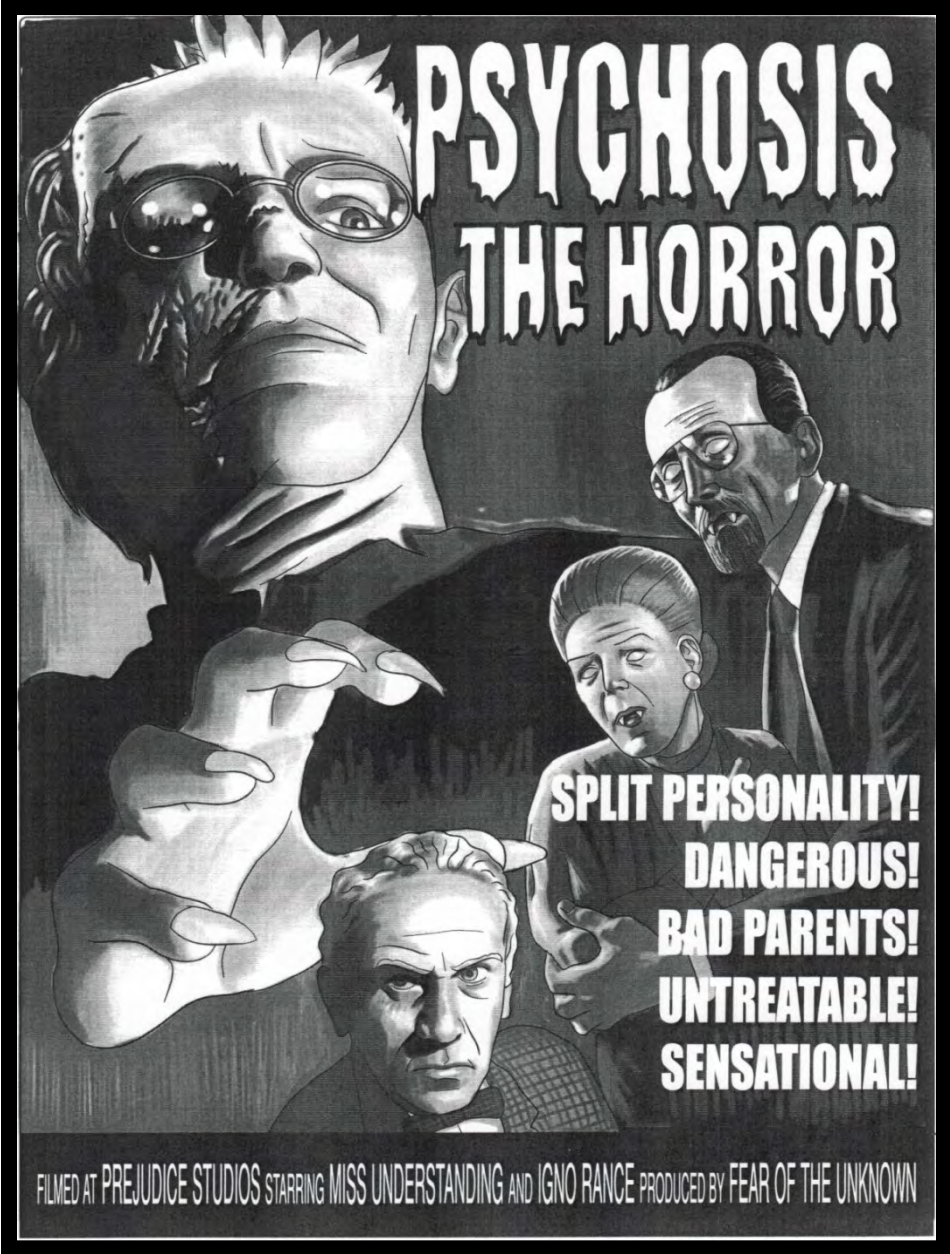
- Reassure the person that it is a panic attack
- Ask the person if you can help



How to Help

- Remain calm and speak in a reassuring but firm manner.
- Speak clearly and slowly, and use short sentences.
- Be patient.
- Avoid any negative reactions.
- Acknowledge that the terror feels very real.
- Remind the person that while a panic attack is frightening, it is not life threatening.
- Reassure the person that he or she is safe and that the symptoms will pass.





PSYCHOSIS THE HORROR

**SPLIT PERSONALITY!
DANGEROUS!
BAD PARENTS!
UNTREATABLE!
SENSATIONAL!**

FILMED AT PREJUDICE STUDIOS STARRING MISS UNDERSTANDING AND IGNO RANCE PRODUCED BY FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN



What Are Psychotic Disorders?

- Psychosis is a mental disorder in which a person has lost some contact with reality.
- The person may have severe disturbances in thinking, emotion, and behavior.
- Psychotic disorders are not as common as depression and anxiety disorders.
- Psychosis usually occurs in episodes and is not a constant or static condition.

Common Symptoms When Psychosis Is Developing

Changes in emotion and motivation

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Irritability
- Suspiciousness
- Blunted, flat, or inappropriate emotion
- Change in appetite
- Reduced energy and motivation



Common Symptoms When Psychosis Is Developing

Changes in thinking and perception

- Difficulties with concentration or attention
- Sense of alteration of self, others, or the outside world (e.g., feeling that self or others have changed or are acting different in some way)
- Odd ideas
- Unusual perceptual experiences (e.g., a reduction in or greater intensity of smell, sound, or color)

Changes in behavior

- Sleep disturbances
- Social isolation or withdrawal
- Reduced ability to carry out work and social roles



Types of Disorders in Which Psychosis Occurs

- Schizophrenia
- Psychotic depression
- Schizoaffective disorder
- Drug-induced psychosis

Characteristics of Schizophrenia

- Delusions
- Hallucinations
- Thinking difficulties
- Loss of drive
- Blunted emotions
- Social withdrawal

How to Help

- Assist the person by remaining calm.
- Talk in a clear, concise way.
- Use short, simple sentences.
- Speak quietly in a nonthreatening tone at a moderate pace.
- Answer questions calmly.
- Comply with reasonable requests.
- Maintain your safety and access to an exit.
- Do not do anything to further agitate the person.

Try to Deescalate the Situation

- Speak slowly and confidently with a gentle, caring tone of voice.
- Do not argue or challenge the person.
- Do not threaten.
- Do not raise your voice or talk too fast.
- Use positive words instead of negative words.
- Stay calm and avoid nervous behavior.
- Do not restrict the person's movement.
- Try to be aware of what may exacerbate the person's fear and aggression.
- Take a break from the conversation.



What If the Person Doesn't Want Help?

- Encourage the person to talk with someone he or she trusts.
- Never threaten the person with hospitalization.
- Remain patient.
- Remain friendly and open.
- The person may want your help in the future.

Give Reassurance and Information

- Treat the person with respect and dignity.
- Offer consistent emotional support and understanding.
- Give the person hope for recovery.
- Provide practical help.
- Offer information.
- **Do not make any promises that you cannot keep.**



What Are Substance Use Disorders?



Substance use disorders include

- Dependence
- Abuse that leads to problems at home or work
- Abuse that causes damage to health

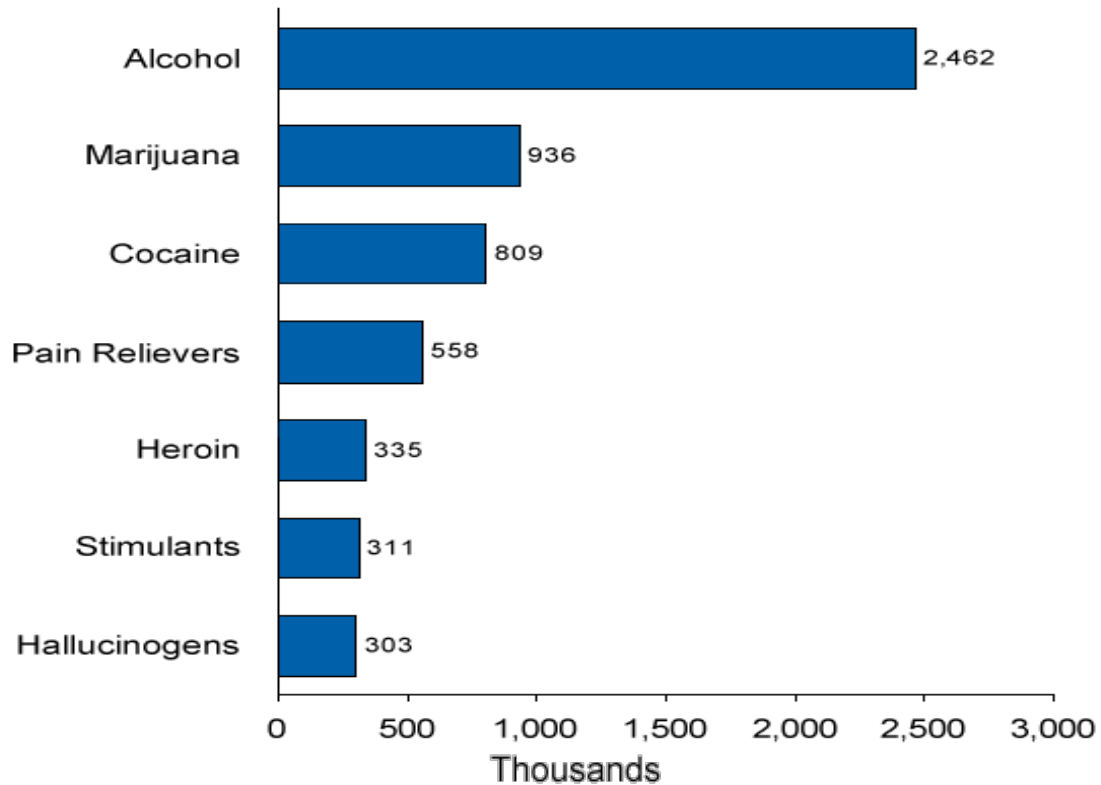
Understanding Substance Use Disorders

- 3.8% of U.S. adults have a substance use disorder in any given year.
- The use of alcohol or drugs does not mean a person has a substance use disorder.
- 75% of people who develop substance use disorders do so by age 27.
- Alcohol use disorders are three times as common as drug use disorders.

Co-Occurrence

- Substance use disorders can co-occur with almost any mental illness.
- Some people “self-medicate” with alcohol and/or other drugs.
- People with mood or anxiety disorders are two to three times more likely to have a substance use disorder.

Number of People Receiving Substance Use Treatment in the Past Year by Substance



2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health,
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Assess for Risk of Suicide or Harm

- Talk with the person about his or her drinking openly and honestly
- Talk with the person in a quiet, private environment
- Talk when both of you are sober and in a calm frame of mind

Keep in mind

- The person's own perceptions of his or her drinking
- The person's readiness to talk
- Use of "I" statements
- The person's recall of events



Do Not

- Join in drinking with the person
- Bribe, nag, or threaten
- Make excuses for the person's behavior
- Take on the person's responsibilities
- Feel guilty or responsible

Encourage Self-Help and Other Support Strategies

- Support groups
- Family, friends, and faith networks
- Avoiding friends and social settings involving alcohol and other drugs

Recovery from Mental Illness

“Recovery is the process in which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.”

“For some, this is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life despite a disability.”

“For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms.”

— *President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health, 2003*

Participation Station

a peer operated center





Participation Station
WARM Line
(877) 840-5167



Questions???

