



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Champlain East
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Champlain Est
La santé mentale pour tous

329 rue Pitt Street
Cornwall, ON K6J 3R1
Tel 613-933-5845
1-800-493-8271
Fax 613-936-2323
cmha-east.on.ca
acsm-est.on.ca

Submitted by: Canadian Mental Health Association Champlain East

Mental Illness Awareness

This year, Mental Illness Awareness Week (MIAW) is happening on October 6 – 12. This is Canada's national campaign aimed at enhancing awareness of mental illness and substance use health, reducing related stigmas, and illuminating the real experiences of those affected. Did you know that the disease burden of mental illness and substance use in Ontario is 1.5x higher than all cancers put together ([Centre for Addiction and Mental Health](#))? This statistic shows the importance of talking more about mental illnesses and substance use, reduce the stigma attached to them and providing access to mental health services for all people affected.

In order to reduce the stigma, it is important to be aware of the myths that still prevail today. This month's article aims to present some myths about mental illness and equip you to dispel them.

Here are five common myths about mental illnesses.

Myth #1: Mental illnesses are not real illnesses.

Fact: Mental illnesses are not just regular ups and downs in life. They create distress, do not go away on their own and are real health problems that can be effectively treated. Just as you wouldn't blame someone with diabetes, you can't blame someone who needs professional help and support while they experience a mental illness.

Myth #2: Mental illnesses will never affect me.

Fact: We will all be affected by mental illness. Research estimates that at least one in five Canadians will experience a mental illness in their lifetime. You may not be living with a mental illness yourself, but it is very likely that a family member, acquaintance or colleague will be.

Myth #3: People don't recover from mental illnesses.

Fact: Today, there are many different types of treatments, services and supports that can help people recover from mental illnesses. In fact, people living with mental illnesses can and do lead productive and engaged lives. If their mental illness lasts a long time, it is possible for them to learn to manage their symptoms in order to achieve their goals. If a person continues to experience many difficulties, it may be a sign that he or she needs help or a different approach.

Myth #4: People who experience mental illnesses are weak and can't handle stress.



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Champlain East
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Champlain Est
La santé mentale pour tous

329 rue Pitt Street
Cornwall, ON K6J 3R1
Tel 613-933-5845
1-800-493-8271
Fax 613-936-2323
cmha-east.on.ca
acsm-est.on.ca

Fact: Stress impacts well-being, but this is true for everyone. People living with mental illnesses may actually be better at managing stress than people who haven't experienced mental illnesses. Many of them learn skills like stress management and problem-solving so they can take care of stress before it affects their well-being. Taking care of yourself and asking for help when you need it are signs of strength, not weakness.

Myth #5: People who experience mental illnesses can't work.

Fact: Mental illness does not make people unable to work. While some people benefit from modifications at work to achieve their goals, many work with little support from their employers. In fact, workplaces include many people living with mental illnesses.

Finally, let's remember that these and many other myths exclude people living with mental illnesses from our community and create barriers to their well-being. If we want to reduce the incidence of mental illnesses around us, it is important to know the facts and to start by reviewing our own beliefs and behaviours.

References:

[Myths About Mental Illness - CMHA National Mental Illness Awareness Week | CAMIMH](#)

DO YOU NEED HELP?

Dial or text 2-1-1 for free and confidential service that easily connects people to the critical social and community supports they need.

If you are thinking of suicide, please call 9-8-8 which is a mental health crisis and suicide prevention line.

The information provided is not a substitute for professional advice. If you need advice, please consult a qualified health care professional. For further information or if you want to access our services at CMHA, please call 1-800-493-8271 or visit our web site at www.cmha-east.on.ca