



BREAK THE CYCLE

What is mental health?

Mental health refers to the psychological and emotional well-being of a person. When there is a disturbance in these areas, the person is said to have a mental illness.

Mental illness negatively affects a person's ability to cope with everyday life. Simple things become difficult to achieve.

People from all different cultures and backgrounds can suffer from mental illnesses. However, some people may be more prone because of a family history of similar illness.

What are the causes of mental illness?

There are many different causes, including complex interactions between a person's genes and their environment. Mental illness includes:

- Mood disorders, which are persistent changes in mood caused by biochemical imbalances in the brain. Examples of mood disorders are depressive disorder and bipolar disorder.
- Anxiety and panic disorders, which are associated with feelings of anxiousness, combined with physiological symptoms that interfere with everyday activities. Obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias and post-traumatic stress disorder are types of anxiety disorders.
- Psychotic Illnesses, which involve a disruption to a person's thoughts and perceptions that make it difficult for them to distinguish what is real and what isn't. Schizophrenia and Substance-induced psychotic disorder are examples of psychotic illnesses.
- Eating disorders, which are characterized by abnormal or disturbed eating habit. Examples include bulimia and anorexia nervosa.

Coping with mental illness

People suffering from mental illness need the love and support of their family, friends and community. Early identification and effective interventions are important to helping people living with mental health issues enjoy a better quality of life. If mental illness is left untreated, it can cause unnecessary suffering now and in the future.

Most people with a serious mental illness can, with treatment, get well and return to productive lives. In most cases, keeping up a normal life in the community helps a person with mental illness get better.

