

MAY is Mental Health Month --Things to Know

Mental illnesses:

- Are medical conditions that disrupt a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and daily ability to function. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.
- Can affect persons of any age, race, religion, or income.
- Mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character, or poor upbringing. Mental illnesses are treatable.
- Most people diagnosed with a serious mental illness can experience relief from their symptoms by actively participating in an individual treatment plan.

Stigma

- Mental Illness is a biological based brain disorders. They cannot be overcome through "will power" and are not related to a person's "character" or intelligence.
- Mental health problems are painful—emotionally, spiritually and socially—especially for children and adolescents.
- Words that make fun of mental health create a sense of shame, feelings of guilt and loss of self-esteem.
- Children and adolescents exposed to such a negative view of themselves feel rejected, lonely and isolated. For a child with a mental health problem, this "stigma" is often the greatest barrier to a complete and satisfying life.

Prevalence

- One in four adults—approximately 57.7 million Americans— experience a mental health disorder in a given year.
- Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, three quarters by age 24.
- The World Health Organization has reported that four of the 10 leading causes of disability in the US and other developing countries are mental disorder.

Cost

- In the U.S., the annual economic, indirect cost of mental illnesses is estimated to be \$79 billion.