

# When it comes to mental health, you can make a difference



More than  
**1 in 5**  
Americans live with a  
mental health condition.<sup>1</sup>

## The impact of stigma

Even though mental illness is common, it can still feel as if there's a sense of shame around it. There are misconceptions around mental health disorders, including that they're a sign of weakness or they're more likely to make people dangerous.<sup>2</sup> You may hear words like "crazy" and "bipolar" used in common language.

Stigma can block healing. Here's how:

- **People feel ashamed and embarrassed.** You may feel you need to hide a mental health condition in a way you wouldn't hide a physical health condition such as diabetes or cancer.
- **People deny there's a problem.** You may internalize the myth that you should be able to control or cure yourself of mental illness.
- **People don't seek help.** If you're ashamed, embarrassed or denying you have a mental health concern, you're less likely to see help.

<sup>1</sup>[About mental health](#). Available at: Cdc.gov. Accessed February 2026.

<sup>2</sup>[Mental health myths and facts](#). Available at: Samhsa.gov. Accessed February 2026.

Mental health stigma and its effects can be worse than the mental health problem itself. Stigma can lead to isolation, loneliness, shame and secrecy.

## People can get better

At its worst, the stigma of mental illness can actually keep people from healing and recovery. People often suffer in silence when they don't have to. With the right help and support, people can get better.

Every person is unique and there are various treatment options out there. It's best for each person to find the option that works best for their individual needs. Treatment can include medication, therapy and lifestyle changes. The important thing is for people to reach out and seek help.

Chances are, someone you care about has dealt with a mental health concern at some point.



## What you can do to help

You don't have to be a therapist to help someone with a mental health condition. You can start by:

- Using respectful language when talking about mental illness
- Learning more about mental health issues
- Speaking out against mental health stigma

People with mental illness can feel alone. If you think someone is dealing with a mental illness, listen without judgment. Be present. Encourage them to seek help from a mental health professional or their doctor. And convey hope. If you want to learn more, check out these resources:

- **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)**. Visit [nami.org](https://www.nami.org) for support and education to end stigma.
- **Mental Health First Aid**. Sign up for a mental health first aid course at [Mental Health First Aid](#).

If you or someone you care about is experiencing mental illness, connect with us for support. We have trained therapists available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You don't have to suffer in silence. We're here to help.

For legal disclaimers, visit [rfl.com/Disclaimers](https://www.rfl.com/Disclaimers).