

# Mental illnesses: when demons live inside your head...

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Bill Clinton once said “ Mental Illness is nothing to be ashamed of, but stigma and bias shames us all.

” Mental illnesses are major health issues that about 44 million people experience in a year (Mental Health By The Numbers). This number is significant. Mental health is associated with the way people think, feel and behave. The problem with having a mental illness is not only dealing with personal issues, but also having to deal with the unwelcoming stigmas and with people that deny these illnesses. Mental illnesses have huge misconceptions and are not well taken care of as much as physical illnesses are. They are often not taken seriously because they are assumed to be temporary and non-problematic.

Mental illnesses have a many different causes and risk factors that contribute to them as well as a whole wide range of negative emotions. A major risk factor is having low resilience and high amount of stress. Resilience is the ability to handle stress without it being debilitating. It all comes down to the way a person deals with obstacles and challenges. Everyone reacts and handles different issues either with negativity or optimism, and the ones that are pessimistic are more likely to develop a mental disorder. It mostly depends on how well a person handles daily life stress.

Mental illnesses are perceived by society as not being as harmful as physical illnesses because they are misunderstood by society, they often lack physical symptoms, and treatments are less successful. It is no surprise that mentally ill people experience stigmas, constant put downs and

unsympathetic labels. Mental illnesses are mistaken for a choice. This is a problem for people that have mental disorders because they will face stereotypes and stigmas that causes them to feel underestimated and misunderstood. This is one of the biggest reasons to why people refuse to seek help.

Avoiding help is a huge problem because mental conditions could be really severe and in need of guidance. Not only that, but chances are low self esteem will increase because people with a mood disorder will harshly blame themselves- causing them to become even more anxious and uncomfortable in social situations which of course can make their mental condition even worse. For example, in the article titled " How Stigma Interferes With Mental Health Care", it states," To avoid the label of mental illness, people decide not to seek or fully participate in care. It diminishes self-esteem and robs people of social opportunities"(Corrigan). This means it is hard to get help even when in need in fear of being misjudged and viewed as " crazy".

If someone is viewed that way, they will be looked down upon and underestimated. But on the other hand, when people do not seek proper health care or treatment. there condition is most likely to worsen over time. It is a tough situation to be in because even though someone wants to get healthier and happier, they will still face load of setbacks and stereotypes. Furthermore, most of the stigmas consist of accusations of who's fault it is that a person has a mental illness.

For instance, in the book titled " Mental Disorders", it states " The cultural understanding is either it's their fault for getting ill, or it's the fault of their

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family" ( Courtney Farrell/pg. 38). This proves that the false accusation is that mental illness is someone's fault and that a person chooses to have it, when in reality they do not. Also, the blame might be aimed at the parents/family assuming they do not provide a safe, positive environment or what they do is not enough. That is not only devastating for the person that suffers from a mental illness, but it is for their parents as well because they feel like they did not do enough and that they can not help their child.

All in all, mental illnesses have such stigmas and false assumptions that negatively affects someone's reputation and self-pride. Mental illnesses could be extremely dangerous and have a huge negative effect on an individual. It could take a huge toll on them, making them feel " drained" and mentally exhausted. People that have a mental disorder are never really satisfied, content or even " happy". Negative emotions vary and they are extreme enough to interfere with a person's life. For support, in the book titled " Mood Disorders", it states, " Affected people obsess about the ways things could go wrong and imagine disastrous scenarios.

These thoughts affected them physically such as sleep problems, headaches and trembling" (Courtney Farrell/ Pg. 28). This summarizes the negative effects of anxiety disorder on an individual's overall health. People that have an anxiety disorder often feel worried and fearful for no reason, and they expect that worst case scenario to happen even when it is unreasonable. Also, referring to the same quote, mental illnesses contribute to physical health.

For example, if a person cannot sleep at night due to anxiety, chances are they might get into a lot of accidents in result of not getting proper rest and sleep. To add on, depression is another common mental illness that also affects people mentally and physically. Unlike anxiety disorder, people with depression believe their life reached the worst point ever that it will not get anymore worse than it already is, so they do not worry about what may arise in the future. Depression makes someone feel bored and like their lives are not worthy. For support, in the book "Depression", it says, "Individuals experiencing depression have trouble sleeping, lose interests in activities, experience a change in weight, feel worthless and hopeless, and feel occupied with death" (Jaqueline Langwith/Pg.

17). As it mentions in the quote, a depressed person feels unmotivated, and constantly "down". Simple and functional tasks like eating, studying and even walking becomes a difficult task. It becomes very hard to keep up with everything. Both anxiety disorder and depression negatively impact an individual.

Anxiety and depression disorders are common illnesses that interfere with a lot of aspects of a person's life as well as it affects their overall health and mindset. Mental illnesses are difficult to deal with because unlike physical health, the effects are invisible, it is hard to diagnose and is confused with normal moods. It is difficult to deal with because there is not one solid guaranteed treatments for mental illness, which is why they are so difficult to "cure" or overcome. To support, in the text "Ignoring Mental Illness is Pure Discrimination", it states "If your leg is broken, it automatically gets

treated, but if your spirit is broken, then it doesn't" (Layard). As it mentions in the quote, negative emotions and thoughts could not be "stopped" or directly repaired. Mental illnesses cannot be seen through x-rays or evidentially proven like a broken bone, so they're very hard to detect and diagnose or to even acknowledge.

Too add on, usually mental illnesses are beyond someone's control. For example, in the book *Mental Disorders*, it says, "Treatment methods are divided into two categories: pharmacologic and psychotherapeutic. Pharmacologic includes drugs and medicine. But these do not always work. Sometimes people with severe and chronic depression are not helped with medicine or cured" (Farrell Pg. 61).

This means psychotherapeutic treatment often utilizes "talk therapy" to find ways to fix problems and to develop coping skills and support systems which which there is fifty-fifty chance of it being effective. But sometimes, drugs are used, and they might not always work if depression is too severe based on the genes. Genes play a big role in being one of the causes of mental illness, and medicine does not seem to cure that or change that. Full recovery is never guaranteed. Some people with healthy lifestyles could have mental illnesses due to their genes, which is uncontrolled and may not be cured.

Not all causes can be "fixed". For example, a person depressed because they're being bullied could be helped by learning how to speak up, finding new friends, and staying away from the bullies. But a person that is ill because of genetic factors really have no control or any other choice to be

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cure, and even if they fix life issues, they still might not consciously feel “okay”. Although coping skills may be utilized to de escalate destructive thoughts and negative emotions, mental illnesses do not have a solid guaranteed treatment that cures it. There is so much society can do to spread awareness, knowledge and supportfor mental health.

It is suggested that psychology education and classes should be reinforced and offered in school in a routinely manner. Not only will people gain better understanding of different types of disorders, but it will also teach them to be empathic and respect other people’s feelings. Also, kids turn out to be similar to their parents and the environment in which they grow up in will emotionally influence them, so it is up to the parents to be positive role models. It is also their job to teach their kids that feeling any emotion is normal and not a sign of weakness and they should never tell them to “grow up” or to “be strong”. Telling kids to just “shake it off” will implant the false idea that feeling down is weakness when really it is a natural reaction to life’s stresses which are inevitable. There are a lot things that can be taken to consideration to better society perception on mental illnesses.

In summary, mental illness should be taken more seriously in society. They should be taken into consideration when medical access and care is being provided. People that suffer from mental illness endure a lot of setbacks that hold them back from enjoying life and being happy. Everyone is different and severity of mental illnesses lead to variation of treatments from one person to another. Many treatments such as talk therapy, stress managements and medications can be put to trial, but could never be guaranteed.

Mental illnesses are serious conditions with harmful effects that should be cared as much as physical health.