

Banish Your Bias

Reducing Stigma One Myth at a Time

1. Mental Health affects a very small % of the population. True False
2. The most common type of mental illness is stress. True False
3. Mental illness can be a result of a biochemical process in the brain, genetic and environmental factors, as well as life events. True False
4. Problematic substance use is a bad habit caused by moral weakness and lack of self-control. True False
5. People who have mental health issues bring it on themselves and could just snap out of it if they wanted to. True False
6. The prevalence of mental health issues is generally higher in the workplace than in the general population. True False
7. There is no effective treatment for mental illness. True False
8. Very few people with mental illness are inclined toward violence. True False
9. Mental illness is a bona fide medical condition and may require treatment the same as any other medical condition. True False
10. People with mental illness don't mind words like nuts, crazy or mental case. True False
11. You should not talk to someone about their mental health, it will only trigger it. True False

See reverse for answers.

Answer Key:

1.	False	Everyone has mental health. Anyone can be affected by mental illness: school age children, professional adults, victims of traumatic events; any age, culture, gender, economic status. Twenty per cent (1/5) of Canadians experience a mental illness in their lifetime.
2.	False	Stress may be a factor in mental illness, but is not a mental illness itself. The most common type is anxiety, then depression. Schizophrenia and bipolar Disorder are less frequent.
3.	True	Some believe that mental illness is caused simply by lack of motivation and one's own attitude, but this is not the case.
4.	False	Substance use can develop from a number of different complexities in a person's life. Effective treatments and supports are available.
5.	False	Everyone has a degree of resilience that varies from person to person. If someone has a mental illness they may not 'rebound' as quickly or completely and therefore require support and intervention.
6.	True	Many people believe that having a mental illness means you can't work but this is a false belief.
7.	False	Early intervention is very effective and may decrease symptoms, decrease the chance of lost time from work, as well as prevent development of other associated illnesses. Treatment may include healthy lifestyle choices, medication, counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy.
8.	True	We sometimes hear this in the media in very public cases. Stigma causes the fear that people feel in being around someone with a mental illness.
9.	True	It is generally an invisible illness which is why it is easy for stigma and misunderstanding to persist.
10.	False	Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect. These words are damaging and you never know who is in the room. Everyone is a person first, if you have to describe someone, put the person first, e.g. 'a person who is depressed', 'a person with mental health concerns'.
11.	False	Everyone should show support, respect people and be open and caring in communication. Some people may not want to talk about it but it should not be avoided either. Respect and creating a safe environment is important.

How did you score?

If any of these myths have affected your thinking, learn more about the realities of mental health at: www.homewood.ca

For more information on your Employee Assistance Program, see www.homewoodhealth.com or phone **1.800.663.1142**
