



# What is mental health?

According to the CDC, mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

## Why is it important?

Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health. Mental illness, especially depression, increases the risk for many types of physical health problems, particularly long-lasting conditions like stroke, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease. Similarly, the presence of chronic conditions can increase the risk for mental illness.

## How common are mental illnesses?

Mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in the U.S.

- More than 50% will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime.
- 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year.
- 1 in 5 children, either currently or at some point during their life, have had a seriously debilitating mental illness.
- 1 in 25 Americans lives with a serious mental illness, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression.

1 in 5

## What causes mental illness?

A number of factors can contribute to risk for mental illness, such as

- Early adverse life experiences, such as trauma or a history of abuse (for example, child abuse, sexual assault, witnessing violence, etc.)
  - Experiences related to other ongoing (chronic) medical condition such as cancer or diabetes.
- Biological factors, such as genes or chemical imbalances in the brain
  - Use of alcohol or recreational drugs
  - Having feelings of loneliness or isolation

