

# 5 Mental Health Myths and Facts

## **MYTH ONE: Mental health problems won't affect me.**

**Fact:** Mental health issues are very common. In 2020, one in five American adults experienced a mental health issue and one in six young people experienced a major depressive episode.

## **MYTH TWO: Children don't experience mental health problems.**

**Fact:** Young children show early warning signs of mental health concerns. Half of all mental health disorders show first signs before a person turns 14 years old, and three-quarters of mental health disorders begin before age 24.

## **MYTH THREE: People with mental health problems are violent and unpredictable.**

**Fact:** Most people with mental illness are not violent and only 3%–5% of violent acts can be attributed to individuals living with a serious mental illness. In fact, people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general population.

## **MYTH FOUR: I can't do anything for a person with a mental health problem.**

**Fact:** Friends and loved ones can make a big difference. Friends and family can be important influences to help someone get the treatment and services they need by:

- Reaching out and letting them know you are available to help
- Helping them access mental health services
- Learning and sharing the facts about mental health
- Treating them with respect, just as you would anyone else

## **MYTH FIVE: Prevention doesn't work. It is impossible to prevent mental illnesses.**

**Fact:** Prevention of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders focuses on addressing known risk factors such as exposure to trauma that can affect the chances that children, youth and young adults will develop mental health problems. Promoting the social-emotional well-being of children and youth leads to:

- Higher overall productivity
- Better educational outcomes
- Lower crime rates
- Stronger economies
- Lower health care costs
- Improved quality of life
- Increased lifespan
- Improved family life