

Fighting the stigma of mental illness

The stigma around mental illness prevents people from seeking the help they need. When you fight that perception, you not only become an ally, you help people in need feel more comfortable seeking care.

Here are some tips for being an ally:

- **Talk openly about mental health:** Use your own experience (if you feel comfortable) or discuss news items to foster open dialogue.
- **Educate yourself and others:** Let others who make jokes or insults about mental illness know that their language is hurtful, not humorous. Remind them they wouldn't make fun of someone with diabetes, heart disease or cancer.
- **Be conscious of language:** Avoid casual use of words like "crazy" or "nuts" to describe people.
- **Be supportive and validating:** If someone opens up to you about their mental health, listen, avoid judgement and don't offer unsolicited advice.

If you or a loved one is battling mental illness, please remember:

- **You are not alone:** An estimated 43.8 million U.S. adults have a mental illness in a given year, and about 17.3 million U.S. adults have had at least one major depressive episode.
- **Treatment can be effective:** Prescription medications and talk therapy successfully help many individuals with mental illness.
- **But finding effective treatment can take time:** Treatment is often trial and error at first. There is no one-size-fits-all approach that works for any mental health condition.
- **Seek support and interaction:** Whether it's you or a loved one who has a mental health condition, you may feel it's easier to isolate and avoid others, but you deserve support.

Visit HorizonBlue.com/doctorfinder to find in-network doctors and hospitals so you can get the care you need when you need it.

Sources: National Alliance on Mental Health, National Institute of Mental Health, WebMD®

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