

Providing the Irish community with information, resources, and opportunities to talk about mental health.

Mental Health VS Mental Illness

Mental Health

Our mental health is the lens through which we experience and process our daily lives, helping us to define our interactions while balancing our emotions.

Mental health undoubtedly has the greatest influence on our overall personal happiness at any given point in our lives. It impacts on our ability to handle adversity, adapt to changes and influences the way we feel about ourselves and others.

Our mental health dictates how we handle stress, develop and maintain relationships and even how we make decisions.

It is essentially a state of wellbeing that shapes every aspect of our lives.

Mental Illness

Mental illness is characterized by distorted thinking, changes in mood and behavior as well as the impairment of normal functioning that persists for prolonged periods of time.

Caused by a variety of reasons, mental illness is common and treatable.

Those who suffer from mental illness can seek help and recover with the skills to live self-directed meaningful lives.

Mental illness has many warning signs. NAMI Chicago's "What is Mental Illness" fact sheet lists many of these signs. This list has been reproduced below (www.namichicago.org)

Recognize the Signs of Mental Illness

- Persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in ordinary activities
- Decreased energy or a feeling of fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating or trouble with memory and attention
- Intrusive thoughts and memories, obsessive behaviors
- Change in sleeping or eating patterns
- Substance use
- Thoughts of death or suicide; self-injury or suicide attempts
- Racing thoughts, pressured speech
- Suspiciousness, paranoia, hypervigilance
- Emotional flatness or lack of expression, apathy, feeling numb
- Difficulty planning or carrying out activities of daily life
- Disorganized speech and thinking, inability to express emotions
- Restlessness, irritability, or anger
- Social withdrawal, isolation
- Trouble understanding or relating to others
- Pounding or racing heart, shortness of breath
- Increased risk-taking behavior, impulsivity
- Excessively cheerful, high, euphoric mood
- Difficulty perceiving reality
- Frequent and extreme mood changes