



*there is no health **without mental health***

the case for **GIVING**

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## 1 in 4 adults have a diagnosable mental disorder.

Some aspects of our culture are “toxic,” and the health and lives of all Americans are at serious risk.

### Did You Know?

“Mental disorders are common in the United States and internationally. An estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older — about one in four adults — suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year.” (NIMH, 2005)

“Studies show that at least one in five children and adolescents have a mental health disorder. At least one in 10, or about 6 million people, have a serious emotional disturbance.” (Surgeon General, 2007)

“People with serious mental illnesses served by our public mental health systems die, on average, 25 years earlier than the general population from preventable health conditions.” (NASMHPD, 2006)

“Every 16 minutes, an American takes his or her life. Each year, roughly 30,000 Americans take their lives, while hundreds of thousands make attempts.” (CDC, 2007)

“Following a decline of more than 28 percent, the suicide rate for 10- to 24-year olds increased by 8 percent between 2003 and 2004 – the largest single-year rise in 15 years.” (CDC, 2007)

“Students 14-21 with an emotional disturbance drop out of school at roughly twice the rate of students with any other disability.” (U.S. Dept. of Ed., 2008)

“For young people 15-24 years old, suicide is the third leading cause of death.” (Surgeon General, 2007)


“Older adults with untreated depression and diabetes die at twice the rate of individuals who receive effective care for their depression. For juveniles, two-thirds of detained male youth and three-quarters of detained female youth have at least one mental health disorder.” (National Center for Mental Health and Juvenile Justice, 2006)

“Although the United States is among the most powerful of the industrialized nations, we have the highest rates of mental illness among developed and developing countries. (World Mental Health Survey,” 2004)

#### Minority populations:

- Have less access to, and availability of, mental health services.
- Are less likely to receive needed mental health services.
- If in treatment, often receive a poorer quality of mental health care.
- Are underrepresented in mental health research. (SAMHSA, 2001)

“Nearly 20 percent of military service members who have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan — 300,000 in all — report symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder or major depression, yet only slightly more than half have sought treatment, according to a RAND Corporation study.” (RAND, 2008).



1 in 5 children are affected...

## America Faces a Mental Health Crisis

Many experts now believe America is facing a mental health crisis. Mental and substance-use conditions are now among the most prevalent health disorders in the United States. The World Health Organization estimates that mental and substance-use conditions cause over one third of all disability in Canada, Western Europe and the United States, dwarfing every other health condition.

The damaging effects of our stressful, socially disconnected society are impossible to ignore. They include, among other things, very high rates of chronic disease, substance abuse, and suicide. The scientific evidence is overwhelming that our mental health affects our overall health. Poor mental health makes us more susceptible to illness and injury, significantly worsens our ability to cope effectively with illness or injury when they occur, and significantly increases recovery time.

Yet, while effective prevention and treatment technologies are available, millions of Americans each year do not seek or receive treatment due to lack of insurance coverage, not knowing how or where to seek help, or the discrimination associated with mental health conditions. This age-old discrimination is particularly harmful.

*“Stigmatization of people with mental disorders has persisted throughout history. It is manifested by bias, distrust, stereotyping, fear, embarrassment, anger, and/or avoidance. Stigma leads others to avoid living, socializing or working with, renting to, or employing people with mental disorders....It reduces patients’ access to resources and opportunities (e.g., housing, jobs) and leads to low self-esteem, isolation, and hopelessness. It deters the public from seeking, and wanting to pay for, care. In its most overt and egregious form, stigma results in outright discrimination and abuse. More tragically, it deprives people of their dignity and interferes with their full participation in society.”<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1999). *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

## picture a close friend, family member, or colleague

Who is struggling with a serious mental disorder. The damaging impact of untreated mental health issues can be widespread.



“Poor mental health is a public health crisis.”

Many experts now believe America is facing a mental health crisis.

### What is a mental and substance-use condition?

The following is a list of treatable conditions. As you review this list, picture a family member, friend, or colleague who is struggling with one of these disorders:

- Clinical Depression
- Substance abuse/addiction (including smoking/tobacco)
- ADHD
- Autism
- Bipolar Disorder
- Schizophrenia
- Eating disorders—Anorexia or Bulimia
- Anxiety Disorders (GAD, OCD, PTSD, Phobias, Postpartum depression, etc.)
- Alzheimer’s Disease and other Dementia

### Who is affected?

Family members, friends, co-workers, caregivers—the damaging impact of untreated mental health issues can be widespread.

“...in the U.S., the annual economic, indirect cost of mental illnesses is estimated to be at least \$79 billion. Most of that amount—approximately \$63 billion—reflects the cost of lost productivity.” (New Freedom Commission on MH, 2003)

How much additional stress and diminished quality of life do family or friends of people with poor mental health experience? When we consider the high prevalence of mental disorders, the disability associated with them, and their impact on friends, family and co-workers, it becomes clear that poor mental health is a public health crisis.





We are Mental Health America

## Who We Are...

For over 100 years, Mental Health America has fought to improve the mental health of Americans of all ages, cultures, and backgrounds. We embrace the concept of “mental wellness” as the driving force for all of our activities. This broad framework aims to redefine mental health in our society in positive terms, rather than focusing exclusively on illness. Every action Mental Health America takes reflects our singular, nationwide mission to enable all Americans to improve their mental health and achieve lasting balance in their lives. We want to help you **“Live Your Life Well.”**

Remember, “There is no health without mental health!”

With over a century of advocacy, public education, and the delivery of programs and services, Mental Health America is the country’s leading nonprofit dedicated to helping all people live mentally healthier lives. With our more than 300 affiliates nationwide, we represent a growing movement of Americans who promote mental wellness for the health and well-being of the nation—everyday and in times of crisis. We envision a just, humane and healthy society in which all people are accorded respect, dignity and the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential free from stigma & prejudice.



Visit us @ [www.liveyourlifewell.org](http://www.liveyourlifewell.org)



## who we help

Mental Health America is committed to advocating for, educating, and providing mental wellness programs to all Americans. However, to better focus our efforts, and to afford our major national and local partners more targeted opportunities to join us in our mission, we have identified the following broad groups of consumers of mental health programs and services:

- Children
- Individual Adults
- Families
- Seniors
- Guardian Professionals  
(vets, first-responders, etc.)
- High-Risk Populations  
(minorities, battered women/children, inner cities)

we are  
America's  
leading  
expert on  
mental  
health policy,  
research,  
and funding.

We work nationwide to  
implement best mental health  
practices, based on proven  
methods, to improve community  
health and well-being.



With our more than  
300 affiliates across  
the country, we  
touch the lives of  
millions.

We want to help you live  
your life well.

## What We Do...

We work nationwide to implement best mental health practices, based on proven methods, to improve community health and well-being...

**WE ADVOCATE** on behalf of Americans facing mental health challenges everywhere to end discrimination against individuals with mental and substance-use conditions, to promote safe and diverse communities for all citizens, and to ensure equitable access to a health care system that offers effective mental health treatment and preventive services. We do this by:

- Convening and participating in numerous symposia within the health services and scientific community to promote state-of-the-art prevention and treatment programs. Our **Council on Science and Research** is a unique venue which brings together mental health consumers, health services industry representatives, policy makers, and scientific experts for this purpose.
- Writing and contributing to articles in prominent national scientific journals highlighting important mental health issues.
- Meeting regularly with key policy makers to provide unbiased, scientifically sound information related to mental health legislation and regulations.

- Convening, through our **Regional Policy Councils**, regular meetings of our affiliates throughout the nation to help interpret and accurately communicate federal policy, state policy, and community need to key stakeholders.
- Working with national media, through our **Coalition for Constructive Coverage**, to ensure accurate, scientifically and culturally appropriate, and impartial coverage of mental health issues in the national press.

**WE EDUCATE** policy makers, the media, community health organizations, and the American public through:

- Forums, articles, classes, printed and online educational products, and numerous social networks. These programs educate Americans that mental illnesses can be reliably diagnosed and effectively treated. Once appropriately treated and supported, virtually all individuals get better, expand their contributions to family and community, and improve the quality of their lives.
- Tireless, nationwide, educational outreach at the community, state, regional, and national level. Over the course of a century, we have transformed our nation's approach to mental health and wellness and led the way for improvements in research, prevention, and treatment.

there is  
no health  
without  
mental health

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Mental Health is an integral part of this definition. There is no health without mental health.

## Access, through innovative technology...

- An online and print library, called **Dialogue for Recovery**, offering guidance and links to resources for Americans facing specific, recently diagnosed mental and substance-use conditions. These materials help consumers learn how to navigate a path back to wellness with the help and guidance of family, friends, and community experts.
- **Live Your Life Well**, a breakthrough program which enables each individual to achieve a significantly higher state of overall wellness in her or his life by actively focusing on ten critical areas of wellness. This program offers tools to strengthen resilience and reduce toxic stress to create a healthier America. It's companion program, **Live My Life Well**, enables each person to design his or her own wellness program and measure progress on a fully personalized path to wellness each day.

Visit [www.liveyourlifewell.org](http://www.liveyourlifewell.org).

**WE SERVE** through our 300+ affiliates, by providing America's communities and consumers:

- Direct access to a broad range of self-help and professional recovery support for people facing mental health challenges.
- Housing and supported employment for adults with severe mental illnesses or referrals to services.
- Easy access to comprehensive mental health screenings which enable individuals to identify a need for help. Using that valuable information, our affiliates then follow up with each individual to ensure they find the resources they need, including funding, to secure effective treatment and sustain them throughout their recovery.

Mental Health America saves lives...





## How We Do It...

“Considering health and illness as points along a continuum helps one appreciate that neither state exists in isolation from the other... everyday language tends to encourage a misperception that “mental health” or mental illness is unrelated to ‘physical health’ or ‘physical illness.’ In fact, the two are inseparable.” (Dept. of HHS, 1999)

Mental Health America believes each person’s total wellness can be charted along a circular continuum of wellness—what we call The Wellness Circle™. The Wellness Circle™ allows us to personally assess our overall wellness at any point in our lives. It reinforces the notion that, no matter where we are on the circle, there is a path to wellness available to us. And, as the data clearly demonstrate, the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of our total health—our wellness—are inextricably linked along this path. We cannot be truly well by focusing on only one aspect of our health.

Perhaps most importantly, the Wellness Circle™ reminds us that each of us is only one life’s event away from needing help with a mental health issue—one step away from a radically different position on our Wellness Circle™. For this reason, discrimination against those facing a serious mental health challenge simply makes no sense. Statistics clearly show we are all very likely to experience just such an event at least once in our lifetime. This is why the educational component of MHA’s mission is so vital.

“...there is a path to wellness available to us.”

Mental Health America believes each person’s total wellness can be charted along a circular continuum of wellness...

**If each of us** knows that the vast majority of mental health conditions are treatable, we can, no matter how challenging the mental health obstacle we face, always chart a course back to wellness. The three states of wellness are:

## Wellness and Prevention

(green, the combination of blue and yellow) - Wellness is a state of being in which an individual is able to participate in all areas of life. It encompasses the notion of balance in one’s life among the mental, physical, and spiritual elements of wellness. A person who has achieved this sense of wellness, this balance, can be fully engaged in their family and community. Personal resilience to stress or trauma helps to prevent individuals from becoming ill.

## Treatment

(blue) - Treatment seeks to resolve or mitigate the harmful effects of a mental or substance-use condition. When someone becomes ill, a wide variety of treatments and supports are effective in returning them to wellness. Pharmaceuticals, psycho-therapies, rehabilitation, and supports are key elements of treatment.

## Recovery

(yellow) - Recovery is a deeply personal process of changing one’s attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills, and roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life with or without limitations caused by illness. (Anthony, et.al., 2002)



Balance in one's life...

## We Need Your Support Now!

For perhaps the first time in history, Americans have within their grasp the capacity to achieve a much higher state of “wellness” than ever before. Mental Health America is dedicated to promoting mental wellness, preventing mental disorders, and ensuring that consumers of mental health services have access to the tools they need to live happy, healthy lives. It is time to raise the bar of service to all Americans who may face a serious mental health challenge in their lives. It is time to shift the focus from simply treating mental disorders to achieving and sustaining lasting mental wellness—wellness of mind, body, and spirit.

For over 100 years we've been dedicated to this enduring vision. We believe that everyone must understand the importance of practicing wellness and seeking treatment when needed. We believe those who need help should know how and where to find it, that they should be nurtured and sustained throughout their recovery, and that they should be educated and coached to learn to achieve permanent wellness through prevention. With your help now, we can make this vision a reality.





“...my son is the case for giving.”

Studies show that at least one in five children and adolescents have a mental or substance-use condition.

“...my family is the case for giving.”



“...I am.”

“...we are.”



Mental Health America  
would like to thank you,  
on behalf of the MILLIONS of Americans  
suffering with mental health conditions.  
Your generous contributions help us save  
lives everyday.



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