

Know the signs for Mental Health Awareness Month

May 2015 Newsletter



Did you know that May is Mental Health Awareness month? Take five minutes to test your mental health “IQ” with the quiz below. Then read about five red flags that can tell you when someone may need your help.

Choose one answer for each question (check your answers at the end of this article):

1. Mental health disorders affect what percentage of Americans each year?¹
a. 5% b. 18% c. 10%
2. The third most common cause of adults being hospitalized each year in the U.S. is:²
a. Pregnancy b. Heart attack c. Depression
3. Mental health disorders cost how much in lost earnings for Americans each year?³
a. \$193 million b. \$2 million c. \$10 million
4. People who take medicine for a mental health problem will need to take it for the rest of their lives.⁴
a. True b. False
5. More people die by suicide each year than in car accidents.⁵
a. True b. False

Do these facts surprise you?

If so, you're not alone. Mental health disorders are much more common, costly and debilitating than many people think.

The good news is that people are talking more openly about mental health. Like any other problem, mental illness is more hurtful and destructive when it's kept secret.

There's a lot to gain if we overcome the stigma linked to mental health issues. We can help each other feel less alone in the face of problems. And we can find help.

What can you do?

First Lady, Michelle Obama, and many other national leaders are

supporting “The Campaign to Change Direction.” It's a drive to alter how many of us view, think and talk about mental health. You can help.

All you need to do is learn five possible signs of mental health distress in those around you. These signs include:

1. Showing sudden or gradual personality changes
2. Acting angry, agitated or moody more often than usual
3. Becoming withdrawn from other people
4. Making bad choices like abusing drugs or alcohol, poor self-care and other self-destructive behaviors
5. Expressing hopelessness

If someone you know is showing any of these signs or other unusual behaviors, that person could be suffering from a mental health problem. If you see any signs, show concern, give hope and get them help.

The answers are:

1. **18% — or almost one in five** — approximately 42.5 million Americans experience mental illness in a given year.
2. **Depression.**
3. **\$193 million.**
4. **FALSE.** Sometimes medication is only needed for a short time. It depends on the person, the problem and the response to the medication.
5. **TRUE.**

¹www.changedirection.org

^{2,3}www.nami.org

⁴www.nimh.nih.gov

⁵www.changedirection.org