

MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Let's end the stigma surrounding mental illnesses

WHY IS MENTAL HEALTH DAY IMPORTANT?

Each year on 10 October, the World Health Organisation (WHO), conducts World Mental Health Day. The aim of this day is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilise efforts in support of better mental health.

Despite increasing acceptance of mental illness, people with mental health conditions still often experience discrimination, stigma and - in some parts of the world - severe [human rights violations](#).

The stigma associated with mental illness makes it challenging for those affected to seek help. Not only is it sometimes embarrassing for people to admit they need support, but there also isn't [enough investment](#) in mental health services.

Many mental health conditions can be treated at a relatively low cost, but there is a [large gap](#) between people who need help and those with access to care.

Therefore, mental health awareness is vital in reducing the stigma and understanding the conditions that affect millions each year. Increased awareness will lead to better quality mental health care, more affordable treatments, and improved research into various mental disorders.

TIPS FOR DISCUSSING MENTAL HEALTH

It's not always obvious when someone is going through a tough time, so it's best to approach conversations surrounding mental illness with sensitivity.

1. RESPECT EVERYONE'S PRIVACY

Don't force anyone to share details they're not comfortable talking about. You may be the first person they have been able to talk to. So, whilst it's important to be a good listener, they may not be ready to discuss everything they're going through.

2. DON'T DIAGNOSE

If you're not a trained counsellor or medical professional, don't make assumptions about other people's conditions or try to diagnose them.

3. SHARE WELL-BEING TIPS

If the person you're talking to will find it helpful, talk about ways of practicing self-care. Exercise, sleep and a healthy diet can help improve overall well-being.

4. OFFER HELP

People suffering with mental illness may find it hard to reach out for treatment. Therefore, you may want to be there as a source of encouragement and support.

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