

DEBUNKING MENTAL HEALTH MYTHS

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NOTE

Note: This is a slightly abbreviated version of the presentation from the WRMC Conference in Salt Lake City, Oct 2024

Some information was removed to avoid confusion taken out of context of the accompanying presentation and/or because of limitations in sharing within the bounds of copyright, and some is not shareable in the pdf format that was requested for the WRMC archive.

A list of references and shareable clips is included at the end of this document. You may contact me for additional information from the presentation at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/michelle-lange-5a494134/>

Prevalence of Mental Health Concerns

- Globally, the risk for any mental health condition over the course of a lifetime is around **1 in 2** people
- Peak incidence is around age 15 years
- Median age of onset is 19 years for males and 20 years for females
- For Americans, **over 20%** are experiencing at least one MI **at any given point in time**
- Globally (these numbers are higher amongst Americans):
 - 1 in 7 10-19-year-olds experiences a mental health condition
 - Depression, anxiety and behavioral disorders are among the leading causes of illness and disability among adolescents
 - Suicide is the **4th leading cause of death** among 15-29 year olds (**2nd in the US**)

Harms of Stigma: Past and Present



How we respond to mental health issues: Are we treating people with dignity?



The W
https://

Due to a continuing pattern of behavior and the mental health difficulties of our singer Perry Farrell, we have come to the conclusion that we have no choice but to

WP EXCLUSIVE

How a 'climate of chaos' went unchecked at Maryland's max-security psych hospital

A Washington Post investigation found that officials didn't act on staff complaints about facility violence, which culminated in a patient brawl, rape and death.

Parents c

May 21, 2024

seconds after

for all our fans who have already bought tickets. We can see no solution that would either ensure a safe environment on stage or reliably allow us to deliver a great performance on a nightly basis.

Our hearts are broken.
Dave, Eric and Stephen

...
than 10

Impacts of Stigma

- **Public Perception:** Many people hold negative views about mental illness, associating it with violence or weakness. These beliefs can lead to discrimination.
- **Internalized Stigma:** Individuals with mental health conditions may internalize societal stigma, leading to feelings of shame and reduced self-worth.
- **Barriers to Treatment and Wellness:** Stigma can discourage individuals from seeking help, contributing to a cycle of worsening mental health and avoidance of care.
- **Cultural Variations:** Stigma and its impact varies across cultures.





Stigma Dies in the Light

Knowledge

facts and combatting misinformation

Perspective

mental health is more than the absence of mental disorders

Focus on Humanity

person-first language, person-first attitudes



DEBUNKING MYTHS

Danger

- Actual relationship between mental health concerns and danger
- Suicidality
- Self-Injurious Behaviors

Programming Note!

- Be less concerned with diagnosis/diagnostic criteria, more with the **impact** that the mental health concern is having on the participant, other participants, and staff

Depression



Bipolar Disorder



Anxiety



Panic Disorder



Eating Disorders



Neurodivergence

- Not necessarily a mental health condition
- Because their ways of processing and responding to information are uncommon in the general population, they can lead to feelings of isolation and being misunderstood
- Many people who are neurodivergent regard themselves as outsiders as a protective mechanism, but are receptive to those who:
 - show interest
 - have patience
 - appreciate their strengths
 - offer accommodations

Autism Spectrum



ADHD



What to do when mental health language is misused?

- As a crutch
- Inappropriate use of boundaries



— **DISCUSSION, STRATEGIES, TAKE-AWAYS**

How well did we meet our objectives?

1. Attendees will be knowledgeable of elements of mental health conditions that are essential and non-essential to address when encountered on programs.
2. Attendees will be knowledgeable of concrete strategies to best support participants experiencing common mental health concerns while on program and to support de-escalation of mental health issues as they arise.
3. Attendees will be made aware of the importance of bringing to light and correcting mental health misinformation, which they can incorporate into staff training and program manuals to better support participants in the field.

Sources and Shareable Media Links

- Statistics sources:
 - (Lancet, 2023, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2215036623001931?dgcid=author>)
 - (WHO, <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/adolescent-mental-health>)
- Depression, Big Black Dog: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XiCrniLQGYc>
- Mania (from Bipolar Disorder), Silver Linings Playbook: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_cSoU5kC70
- ADHD, Holderness Family: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=oembed&v=vtgK5pJwnxc>
- Autism, Young Sheldon Season 4, Episode 6