

What You Need to Know About Mental Illness

- According to the Surgeon General, one in every five Americans experiences a mental disorder in any given year and half of all Americans have such disorders at some time in their lives.
- These illnesses of the brain affect all of us, regardless of age, gender, economic status or ethnicity.
- About one in 17 lives with a serious mental illness such as schizophrenia, major depression or bipolar disorder.
- One in five U.S. service members who served in Iraq or Afghanistan suffers from major depression or combat stress (PTSD).
- One in ten children and youth has a serious mental illness condition.
- About half of students with a serious mental illness in special education drop out of high school – the highest dropout rate of any disability group.
- Fewer than one-third of adults and one-half of children who live with mental health needs receive any level of treatment in any one year.
- Only one in three adults who lives with a serious mental illness is employed, even though most want to work.
- Twenty-six percent of the homeless population lives with a severe mental illness.
- One out of every five community hospital stays involves a primary or secondary diagnosis of mental illness.
- About 20-25% of jail and prison inmates and youth involved with juvenile justice live with a serious mental illness.
- We lose one life to suicide every 15.8 minutes. The suicide rate for older adults is 50% higher than the national rate as a whole.

Does Your Pastor Know...

- One in four persons sitting in our pews has a family member struggling with mental health issues.
- 60% of individuals with a mental health issue go **first** to a spiritual leader for help.
- Studies show that clergy are the **least** effective in providing appropriate support and referral information.
- Our faith communities **can** be a caring congregation for persons living with a mental illness and their family members.

People with mental problems are our neighbors. They are members of our congregations, members of our families; they are everywhere in this country. If we ignore their cries for help, we will be continuing to participate in the anguish from which those cries for help come. A problem of this magnitude will not go away. Because it will not go away, and because of our spiritual commitments, we are compelled to take action.

~ Rosalynn Carter