

STIGMA

is the aura of shame and blame that surrounds people who experience mental health conditions.

Myths reinforce stigma **DESPITE** an overwhelming amount of research to the contrary. Several enduring myths attached to people with mental health disorders include:

MYTH Many people think that mental health disability is a choice (particularly with substance disability.) People think that they can “decide” to be happy when they are depressed by replacing negative thoughts with positive thoughts or just “pull themselves up by their boot straps.” **WRONG.**

FACT Mental illness and addictions are medical illnesses. They can be diagnosed and treated with medication, talk therapy or in combination. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) considers mental and substance disabilities as “legitimate” as physical disabilities. **YES!**

MYTH People with mental health disabilities can't handle the stress of the job. **FALSE.**

FACT All jobs are stressful to some extent for everyone. Cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) is just one tool that can be used to help any employee deal with stress on the job. The stress of unemployment is far worse than the stress of employment. **CORRECT!**

MYTH People with mental health disabilities are unreliable. **NOPE.**

FACT Employers who report hiring people who have had their mental health restored through treatment say they are above average in attendance and punctuality and are as motivated if not more as other employees. **THAT'S RIGHT!**

MYTH Recovery is not possible for people with mental health disabilities. **NOT TRUE.**

FACT Long-term studies prove that the majority of people with mental health disorders who seek and maintain treatment show genuine improvement over time and lead stable productive lives. **TRUTH!**

MYTH People with mental health disabilities are violent. News reports, movies or entertainment television often portray or infer that people with mental health disabilities are violent. Or, they speculate that people who commit violent acts MUST have mental health disorders. **WRONG AGAIN.**

FACT A scholarly review of research done by Cornell University indicates that “none of the data gives any support to the sensationalized caricature of the mentally disordered served up in the media.” **DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE.**



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