

Mental Health

Understanding is the First Step



Asian American Health Initiative
Montgomery County
Department of Health and Human Services



Mental Health Statistics

1 in 5 Americans live with mental illness (National Alliance on Mental Illness).

Asian Americans are three times less likely to seek help for their emotional or mental health concerns than White Americans (American Psychological Association).

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death for Asian Americans (The Office of Minority Health).

Asian American women ages 15-24 and 65 and older have the highest suicide rates among women across all racial/ethnic groups (National Alliance on Mental Illness & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention).

Many refugees from war-torn Southeast Asian countries suffer from mental illness, 50-70% suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, 40% suffer from depression, and 35% suffer from anxiety (National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association).

Abby lost her job two months ago and her husband, Jonathan, works full-time. One day, Jonathan comes home from work and finds Abby lying on the couch watching TV, in the same clothes she was in the night before.



No, I searched for a few hours, but nothing looked interesting.





But it's only 5:30 pm...

I've noticed you have less energy, have multiple headaches, and have been eating less. Are you feeling sick?



Jonathan, I told you I'm just tired and I want to go to bed!


Signs and Symptoms of Mental Illness

Experiencing one or more of the following can be an early warning sign




Source: [Mentalhealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov)

A couple of days later...




It's Sunday, let's go to the health fair at the temple.

I don't really feel like getting ready, maybe next time.



You usually love going to community events. The next one won't be for another five months.



Okay, fine. I'll get ready.

At the health fair, Abby and Jonathan make their way to the Asian American Health Initiative's Resource Information Table.



Hey Abby, this handout looks interesting.

Hi, I see you're looking at our mental health handout. What do you know about mental health and mental illness?



I don't know, no one in my family has mental illness.

Mental health is an important part of our overall health. Here's some more information on it.



What is mental health?

A state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.

What is mental illness?

Collectively all diagnosable mental disorders or health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

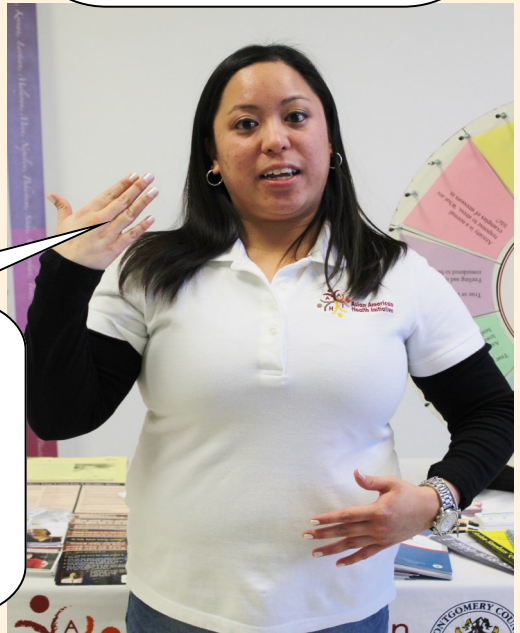
Thank you, but only crazy people have mental health problems.



Having mental health problems doesn't mean a person is crazy. Understanding mental health and mental illness is part of staying healthy.



Some people think mental illness only affects the brain, but our mind and body are connected. Our mind is powerful; it affects how we think, feel, and act.



Some people find it helps to talk to someone they trust, like a family member, friend, or doctor.



I understand your concerns and you're not alone. However, when a person bottles their emotions, it can be harmful to their health.

Talking to a mental health provider may be helpful because the provider can offer unbiased evaluations.



Types of Mental Health Providers

Psychiatrists may provide medical and psychiatric evaluations, treat psychiatric disorders, provide psychotherapy, and prescribe and monitor medications.

Psychologists may provide psychological testing and evaluations, treat emotional/behavioral problems and mental disorders, and provide a variety of psychotherapeutic techniques.

Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse Practitioners may provide assessment and diagnosis, prescribe medications, and provide therapy for individuals with psychiatric disorders or substance abuse problems.

Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurses may provide assessments and treatment of psychiatric illnesses, case management, and psychotherapy.

Social Workers may provide case management, inpatient discharge planning services, placement services, and a variety of other daily living needs services for individuals.

Licensed Professional Counselors may provide assessment and diagnosis of mental health conditions as well as individual, family, or group therapy.

Peer Specialists are individuals who can offer a unique perspective in the recovery process, from someone "who has been there."

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness



Isn't that person just going to give me medication?



Not all treatment involves medication. After speaking to a counselor, social worker, or psychologist, they can determine if a referral to a psychiatrist is necessary. The psychiatrist may then prescribe medication.

Did you know?

Each individual's situation must be assessed carefully and treatment should be individualized. Medication may be useful in reducing some symptoms. Oftentimes, the best treatment involves both medication and some form of talk therapy.

If a person prefers not to talk to a mental health provider, there are other ways a person can help take care of themselves.

Exercising regularly, having a routine sleep schedule, and talking to a trusted friend or family member are a few ways that can help a person stay mentally healthy.

If these activities don't help, here's our Resources Brochure that has contact information for mental health services in the area.

Thank you for the information. I really learned a lot! I appreciate you taking the time to talk to me.

Local Mental Health Services

If you or someone you know is experiencing several symptoms or if any of the symptoms get worse, there are support services available.

Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services offers a variety of mental health/substance abuse and crisis services. For more information on these services, please contact Access to Behavioral Health at 240-777-1770.

There are also linguistically and culturally sensitive mental health providers available to the Asian American community. For more information, please contact the Asian American Health Initiative at 240-777-4517.

**Be the one that
makes a difference**

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Disclaimer: The characters, places, and incidents depicted in this photonovel are fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons or events is entirely coincidental.



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Together To Build A Healthy Community



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