

Common Mental Illnesses in Adults



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While anyone can be diagnosed with a mental illness at any time, there are some mental illnesses that are most common for adults to have or be diagnosed with. The four most common mental illnesses for adults to have are Anxiety Disorders, Major Depression, Bipolar Disorder and Schizophrenia.

Anxiety disorders

Anxiety disorders are a very common mental illness. About one in nine Americans experience an anxiety disorder every year. There are several kinds of anxiety disorders including:

Panic disorder

When panic attacks happen often and without warning. Those with panic disorder may avoid places that have caused panic attacks in the past.

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

Intruding thoughts or ideas, (obsessions) that also may have related time-consuming rituals (compulsions).

Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

Experiencing a traumatic event (such as war, abuse, a natural disaster, etc.) many times and avoiding people or settings that are reminders.

Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD)

Worrying about situations in life that are difficult to control. Physically, those with GAD feel edgy, very tired, have difficulty sleeping and concentrating for at least six months.

Major Depression

Having Major depression is different than feeling sad. Major Depression lasts a long time and can have a negative impact on a person's thoughts, mood, and health. Some signs of Major Depression are:

- Feeling sad, or irritable
- Changes in sleep, appetite, and energy
- Having a hard time focusing
- Memory loss
- Moving slower
- Not interested in activities that were once enjoyed
- Feeling of guilty or hopeless
- Having suicidal thoughts
- Headaches, stomach problems or constant pain that does not change with treatment

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder causes huge changes in a person's mood, energy, and ability to think clearly. These changes look very different from person to person and change over time for an individual. Over 10 million people in America have bipolar disorder. Although bipolar disorder can develop anytime, the average age is 25. Some signs of bipolar disorder are:

- **Mania.** Mania is a very high mood. Some signs of mania are:
 - Difficulty sleeping or not being tired
 - Talking very fast about a lot of different things
 - Making poor choices, not thinking things through
 - Taking huge risks
 - Getting upset easily
 - Hypomania happens when some of these signs happen but are not as extreme as mania.

- **Depression:** Depression is a low mood. It can make it hard for people to live their daily life. Some signs of depression are:
 - Feeling very sad
 - Feeling very tired or sleeping a lot
 - Feeling angry, guilty, or worthless
 - Eating too much or too little
 - Not being interested in fun activities
 - Thoughts of death or suicide

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness that is long term. Those with schizophrenia may have a hard time with their emotions, relating to others, or making decisions. Many times, signs of schizophrenia start when someone is a teenager or a young adult. Some signs of schizophrenia are:

- Seeing or hearing things that are not there (called hallucinations)
- Having beliefs that are not true
- Having a hard time thinking clearly
- Memory loss
- Do not believe that they have an illness (this is known as anosognosia)
- Does not express a lot of emotion
- Speaking in a dull way.
- Difficulty maintaining conversation

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