

Mental Health: What is it?
How do we Break the Stigma?
and How Can Lions Help?

What Does It Mean When We Say, “Mental Health?”



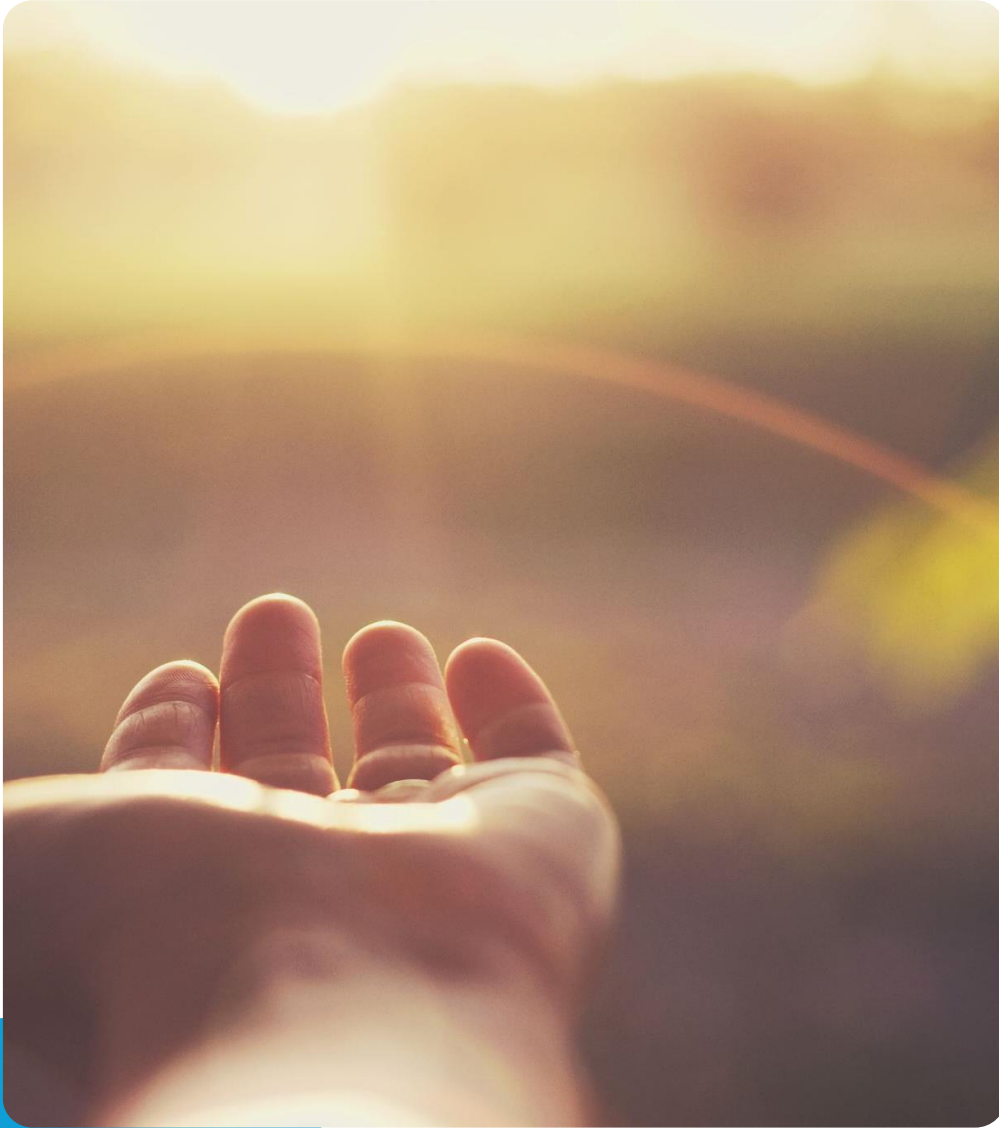
Emotional, psychological, and social well being, influencing how we think, feel, and act?



Someone who has been diagnosed with a mental health issue, such a bipolar disorder or depression?



The absence of sadness, stress, or any negative emotion under all circumstances?



What is Mental Health?

- Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well being.
- Good mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness; it is our resource for coping with life's ups and downs.
- Mental health is a continuum from positive well-being to severe distress or impairment.
- Mental health is like physical health. Some people are healthy, some may have minor health issues, and some more serious health issues.

What is Mental Illness

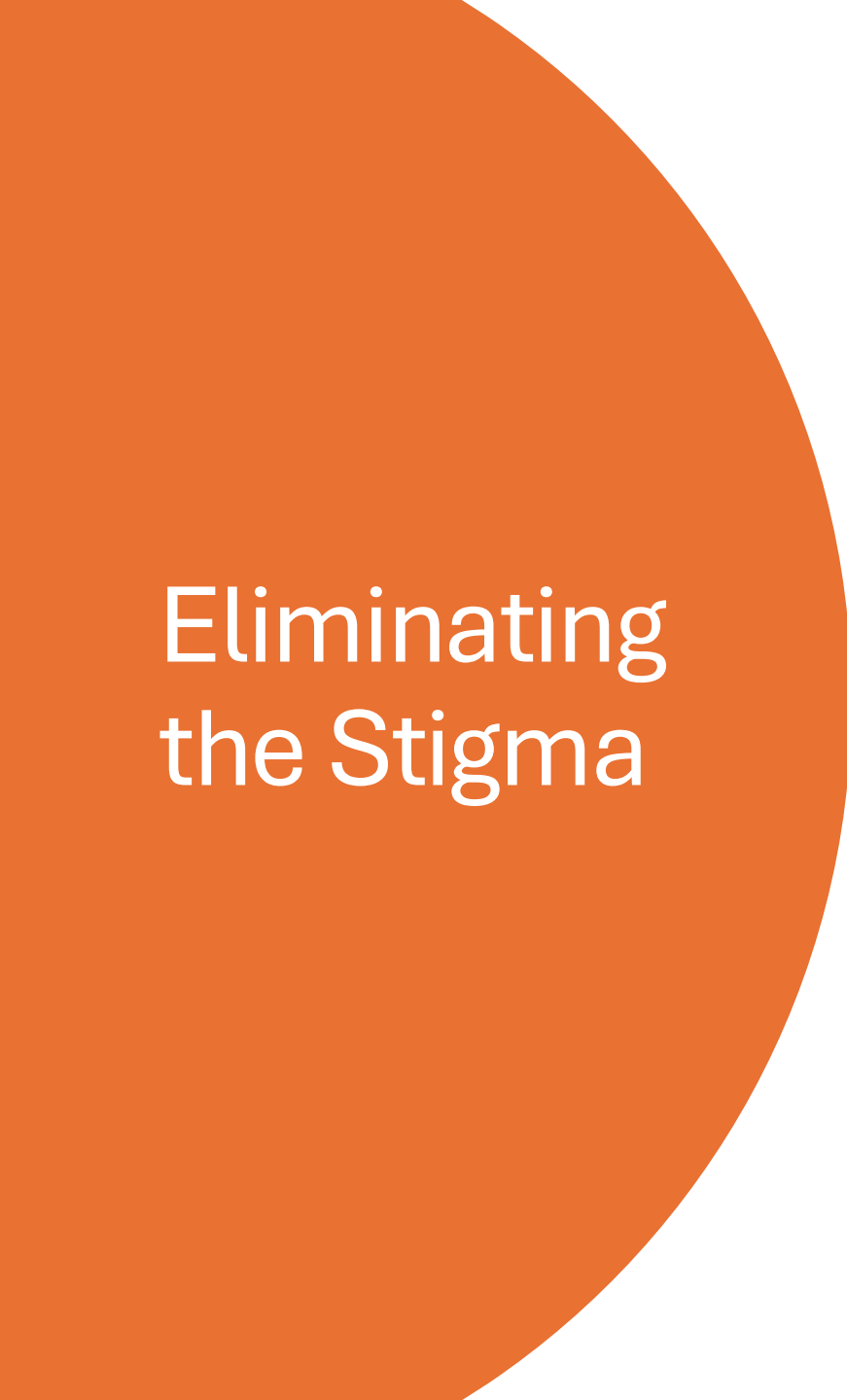
- Mental illness is a medically diagnosed disorder that disrupts thinking, mood, or behavior
- Mental illness is treatable and people can live productive, fulfilling lives with proper support



The Stigma

- **Which statement is a common misconception about mental health challenges?**
 - Mental health conditions can impact anybody
 - A mental health issue is a sign of personal weakness or lack of willpower
 - Open conversations about mental health can reduce the social stigma and encourage help seeking





Eliminating the Stigma

- Nearly 46% of all Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition at some point in their lives.
- Let's look at some famous people who had a mental illness...



Famous Persons with Mental Illness

Jim Morrison <i>bipolar</i>	Winston Churchill <i>bipolar</i>	Princess Diana <i>Eating disorder</i>	John Keats <i>bipolar</i>	Elton John <i>Bulimia nervosa</i>
Carly Simon <i>social phobia</i>	Boris Yeltsin <i>depression</i>	Cole Porter <i>depression</i>	Tipper Gore <i>depression</i>	Vaslav Nijinsky <i>schizophrenia</i>
Kurt Cobain <i>bipolar</i> <i>adhd</i>	Richard Dreyfuss <i>depression</i>	Tennessee Williams <i>depression</i>	F. Scott Fitzgerald <i>depression</i>	
Ludwig van Beethoven <i>bipolar</i>	Charles Schultz <i>depression</i>	Dick Clark <i>depression</i>	Edgar Allan Poe <i>depression</i>	Leo Tolstoy <i>depression</i> <i>hypochondriasis</i>
Charles Dickens <i>depression</i>	Kitty Dukakis <i>bipolar</i>	Sarah Melachlan <i>depression</i>	James Taylor <i>depression</i> <i>bipolar</i>	
Patty Duke <i>bipolar</i>	Ted Turner <i>bipolar</i>	Sigmund Freud <i>depression</i>	Abraham Lincoln <i>depression</i>	
Harrison Ford <i>depression</i>	Courtney Love <i>depression</i>	Francis Ford Coppola <i>bipolar</i>	Jim Carrey <i>depression</i>	Sylvia Plath <i>depression</i>
Ernest Hemingway <i>depression</i>	Audrey Hepburn <i>depression</i>	Kim Basinger <i>panic disorder</i>	Winona Ryder <i>depression</i>	
Drew Carey <i>depression</i>	James Garner <i>depression</i>	Drew Barrymore <i>depression</i>	Vincent Van Gogh <i>bipolar</i>	Ray Charles <i>depression</i>
George Fredrick Handel <i>bipolar</i>	Marilyn Monroe <i>bipolar</i>	Ernest Hemingway <i>depression</i>	Theodore Roosevelt <i>bipolar</i>	
Isaac Newton <i>bipolar</i>	Anthony Hopkins <i>depression</i>	John Nash <i>schizophrenia</i>	Natalie Cole <i>depression</i>	
Irving Berlin <i>depression</i>	Paula Abdul <i>bulimia nervosa</i>	Janet Jackson <i>depression</i>	Axl Rose <i>bipolar</i>	Eric Clapton <i>depression</i>
Barbara Streisand <i>social phobia</i>	Charles Darwin <i>panic disorder</i>	Sheryl Crow <i>depression</i>		



How Can Each Person Help?

- Pay attention-watch for unusual behavior, prolonged sadness, withdrawal, or sudden changes in sleep or work habits
 - Mental Health First Aid Training
- Listen without judgment-create a safe space to share
- Encourage professional help, counseling, or hotlines (988 suicide hotline) when distress impacts daily functioning
 - Resources are listed on the Lions Website





How Can Lions' Help?
Volunteer for Existing
Programs Or Create
Your Own



Existing Programs Include

- **Crisis Text Lines & Hotlines**
 - **Mental Health Advocacy & Education:** Help [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) or [Mental Health America](#) by helping run local support groups, community outreach, and anti-stigma campaigns.
 - **Suicide Prevention:** Work with organizations like the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention](#) to fundraise, participate in community walks, and deliver awareness education.
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Lions Club International Highlights Suicide Prevention



The poster features a central illustration of two hands, one purple and one teal, holding a small purple heart. The background is a light blue sky with stylized clouds. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with various font sizes and colors (purple, teal, blue, and white) to create visual hierarchy.

LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL
WE SERVE

STRONGER
PEOPLE
BRIGHTER
COMMUNITIES

KINDNESS
CREATES
BRIGHTER
TOMORROWS

Suicide Prevention

AWARENESS MONTH

**Connection Matters.
Hope Matters.
You Are Not Alone.**

Every conversation can make a difference. Reach out, listen without judgment, and help connect people to support. Suicide prevention starts with awareness, compassion, and community.

People Help People



Know the warning signs

Be aware. You could make a difference.



Check in with someone

A simple conversation can change a life.



Encourage professional support

Help connect people to the right resources.



Need help now?

Call or text **988** to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. If there is immediate danger, call **911**.

LISTEN
SUPPORT
CONNECT
CARE
TOGETHER

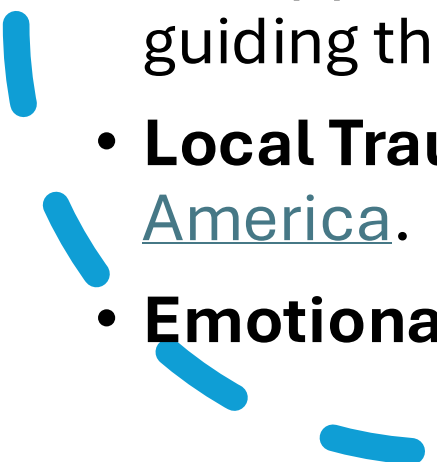
Lions serving with compassion, hope, and community care.

Other Existing Programs Include

- **Youth & Campus Emotional Health:** Volunteer with [The Jed Foundation](#) or [Active Minds](#) to promote emotional wellness, peer networking, and mental health resources in high schools and college campuses.
- **Targeted Community Support:** Assist specialized groups like [The Trevor Project](#) (supporting LGBTQ+ youth) or [Trans Lifeline](#) that provide micro-grants, advocacy, and peer support for vulnerable populations.



Existing Help for Veterans Includes

- **Companionship & Isolation Prevention:** Join the [VA Compassionate Contact Corps](#). Volunteers are matched with isolated veterans for weekly, 15-to-60-minute phone or video calls.
 - **Digital Peer Mentorship:** Become a trained "Pathfinder" or "Ambassador" for [Objective Zero](#). Volunteers use the organization's app to support service members and veterans via text, voice, or video chat, guiding them to critical suicide-prevention resources.
 - **Local Trauma Support:** Volunteer with the [PTSD Foundation of America](#).
 - **Emotional Check-Ins:** Support the [Wounded Warrior Project](#) (WWP).
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Existing Help for Elderly Includes

- **Crisis & Emotional Support Lines:** Volunteer for the [Institute on Aging's Friendship Line](#). This is the only 24/7 national toll-free line dedicated to older adults. Trained volunteers make outgoing reassurance calls and take incoming calls from seniors dealing with loneliness, grief, anxiety, or depression.
 - **1-on-1 Telephone Reassurance:** Serve as a virtual "phone buddy" through organizations like [Friendly Voices](#) or regional [Friendly Caller Programs](#).
 - **Alzheimer's & Dementia Support:** Get involved with the [Alzheimer's Association](#). You can train to become a support group facilitator, providing a safe space for people living with early-stage dementia or helping their family caregivers process burnout and emotional stress.
 - **In-Person Companionship:** Connect with [Elder Helpers](#) or local "Friendly Visitor" networks. Volunteers visit seniors in care facilities or their own homes to read, play games, share hobbies, or simply offer dedicated, non-judgmental company.
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Request for Help from Special Olympics

- Set up a Lions' table at their events with information on mental health
- Upcoming events:
 - **Shenandoah Super Games**
 - Sunday, November 1, 2026
 - Bridgewater College – [402 East College Street, Bridgewater, VA 22812](#)
 - **Special Olympics Virginia Fall Championships**
 - November 7-8, 2026
 - Virginia Beach, VA (multiple locations)
 - **Woodberry Forest Basketball Tournament**
 - Sunday, January 24, 2027
 - Woodberry Forest School – [898 Woodberry Forest Road, Orange, VA 22989](#)
 - **Special Olympics Virginia Basketball Championships**
 - February 20-21, 2027
 - Henrico Sports & Events Center – [1 All Star Boulevard, Glen Allen, VA 23059](#)
 - **Potomac Swim Regional**
 - Sunday, April 25, 2027
 - George Mason University – [4400 University Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030](#)
 - **Special Olympics Virginia Summer Games**
 - June 11-12, 2027
 - University of Richmond – [410 Westhampton Way, Richmond, VA 23173](#)

Young Adults Rise-A new program supported by the Basye-Bryce Mountain Lions Club

- A free program designed to help twentysomethings develop community and improve their confidence in their future.
- Emphasis on building community, supporting community and becoming part of the larger community
- Build confidence through learning and exercising life skills
- Individualized development based on needs
- To learn more, visit youngadultsrise.org or email MHUMC.YAR@gmail.com

Wrapping UP

- Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well being.
- Mental illness impacts a significant percentage of Americans
- Mental illness is not a sign of weakness
- Lions can help
 - As an individual
 - Through existing programs