

Don't **bottle**  
it up.

# MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS SIGNS & MYTHS

## What is Mental Health?

People who are mentally well are able to carry on their usual daily activities, cope with their emotions, and overcome problems in a positive manner, have self-respect and have confidence in their ability to deal with life's challenges. People who are experiencing mental health problems can experience a significant impairment of thought, mood, memory or the way they view the world that affects their judgement, behaviour, capacity to recognise reality, and/or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life. They may also be experiencing difficulties at work or home as a result.

## What are Common Signs?

People who experience mental health problems exhibit certain signs; these can be physical, mental or changes in behaviour. Below is a list of signs common in most people who have mental health problems. A person may exhibit one or several of these signs.

- Withdrawal from their normal activities.
- Excessive tiredness or fatigue.
- Confused or distorted thinking, difficulty concentrating.
- Inappropriate expression of emotions (excessive anger, guilt, tearful, shame or fear).
- Loss of touch with reality.
- Inability to maintain their normal positive personal relationships.
- Inability to cope with daily life problems.
- Inability to take care of one's personal needs.
- Negative self-image and outlook.
- Feelings of hopelessness or helplessness.
- Violence towards self or others (including self-harming).

## What is Stigma?

The biggest obstacle facing those with a mental illness is Stigma. Stigma is a mind-set that disadvantages an individual and justifies their exclusion from normal life. A mental health problem can be made worse when it is accompanied by misunderstanding, rejection, and ridicule. Stigma contributes to a worsening of the symptoms of mental illness. It will prevent many people from seeking help until it is too late.

## Mental Health Myths.

Myth 1. 'Only weak people have mental health problems / my bosses will blame me'.

**Fact:** Anyone can be affected by mental health problems at any time in their lives.

Myth 2. 'If someone has a problem, they will get help'.

**Fact:** Most people do not get help because they are concerned about the consequences at work or their relationships or are worried about confidentiality.

Myth 3. 'My mate's / colleague's mental health problems are none of my business'.

**Fact:** Mates / colleagues are best placed to notice problems and provide both support and encouragement to seek help.

Myth 4. 'The military doesn't support personnel who have mental health problems/I don't know where to get help'.

**Fact:** The Army fully supports personnel with mental health problems as with any other illness or injury. The Army provides multiple ways to get help such as a TriM practitioners, Chaplains, your Unit Welfare Officer, your Medical Officer or Nurse...if they can't help they will know who can.

Myth 5. 'No-one can help me if I have a mental health problem / I don't trust mental health professionals'.

**Fact:** You can be helped. Good evidence shows that professional treatment helps, the earlier the better.

Seeking help early may help you get back on track at home and at work...Don't Bottle It Up.

