Mental Illness

Mental illnesses are conditions that affect the brain. They can causes changes the way people feel, think, and/or behave. They can disrupt daily functioning and the ability to relate with others.

Like other health problems, like diabetes or asthma, mental illnesses can happen to anyone. Mental illnesses can affect anybody regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, or background.

Mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness or poor upbringing. They are not related to a person's character or intelligence and cannot be overcome through "will power."

No one knows the exact cause of mental illnesses; they are a product of the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors. Family history (genetics), brain chemistry, or stressful events may contribute to their development.

Mental disorders fall along a continuum of severity, from less severe and situational (depression that occurs after a death) to severe and debilitating.

Who is Affected?

Mental illnesses are surprisingly common.

About 50 million people in the U.S. are affected by mental illness.

Almost every family in America is affected by a mental illness.

Five to nine percent of children experience serious emotional disturbances.

Symptoms of mental illnesses typically begin to appear in adolescence or young adulthood. Unlike most disabling physical diseases, mental illness begins very early in life. Half of all lifetime cases begin by age 14, three quarters have begun by age 24.
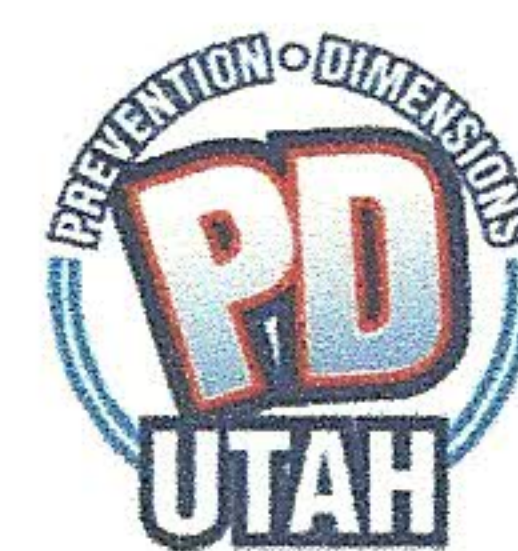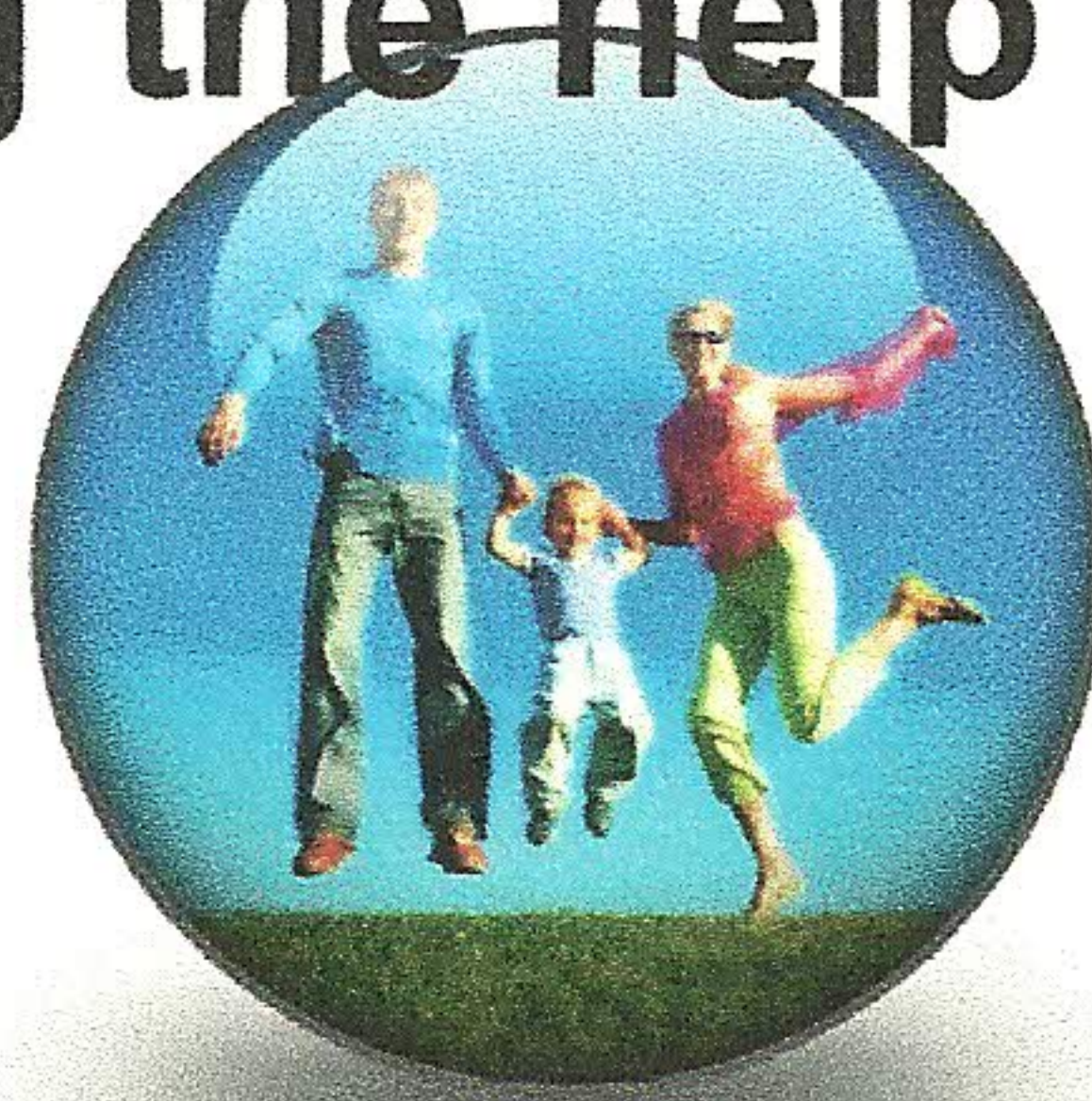
STIGMA

A stigma is something judged by others as a sign of shame, embarrassment, disgrace, or humiliation. Unfortunately, there is a social stigma associated with mental illnesses. This stigma is perpetuated through the use of derogatory language and labels, misconceptions, preconceived notions, stereotypes and hurtful representations in the media, and a lack of knowledge.

This stigma can be painful for individuals and for families.

It can lead to disrespect, ridicule and intolerance, and mistreatment. Stigma can also create barriers that cause people to turn their back on people with mental illnesses, which can lead to isolation, exclusion, and discrimination. It also prevents people from seeking treatment or getting the help they need.

ELIMINATING STIGMA,

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

Use respectful language. Don't label people with words like "crazy," "wacko," "psycho," or by their diagnosis. Instead of saying someone is a "schizophrenic" say "he or she has schizophrenia." It's important to make a distinction between the person and the illness.

Learn the facts about mental illness and share them with others, especially when you hear something that isn't true.

Treat people with mental illnesses with respect and dignity, as you would anyone else.

If someone tells you about his or her mental illness; be understanding, and supportive.

Respect the rights of people with mental illnesses and speak out about unfair treatment.

PD UTAH

TREATMENT

Like physical illness, mental illness may require treatment.

A diagnosis is based on a person's symptoms, how long they have been going on, and how much they affect daily life.

Only a qualified mental health professional can make a diagnosis.

Treatment varies depending on the individual. Some people work with therapist, counselors, psychologist, psychiatrists, nurses, or social workers. They also use self-help strategies and support groups. Often people combine these treatments with some of the most advanced medications available. Like other health problems, some types of mental illness require ongoing treatment, or even hospitalization.

As with any type of illness, love, support from family and friend, and treatment are keys to recovery.

WHY SOME PEOPLE DON'T SEEK HELP AND TREATMENT

Some people feel ashamed or afraid to seek help for an emotional health problem. The stigma associated with mental illness is one of the biggest barriers to recovery.

Some people may not realize they are ill.

Some people may think it will just go away and they can get over it on their own.

Some people don't realize their illness can be treated or they don't know where to go for help.
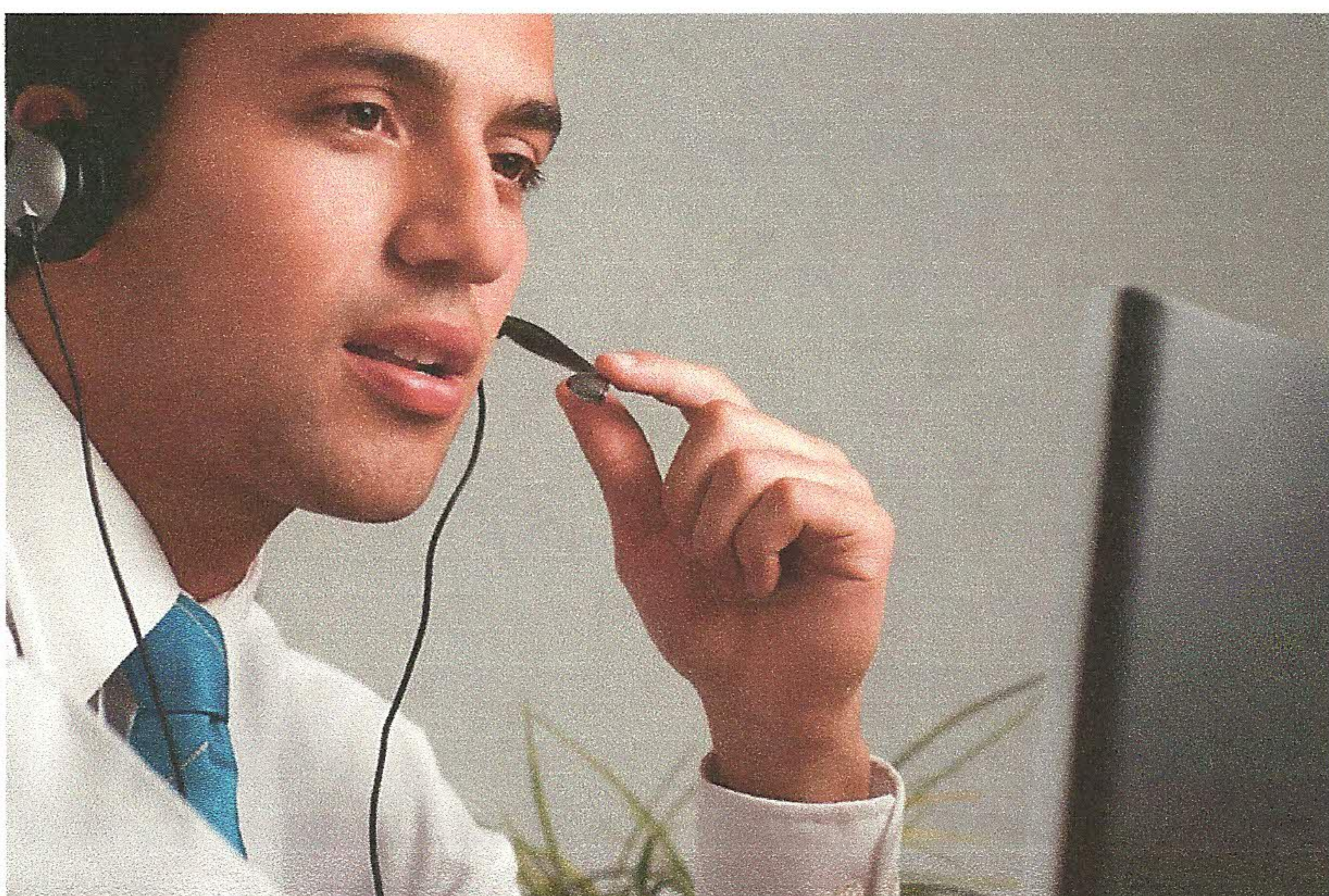
It's very important to seek help if you suspect that you or someone you know has a mental illness.

WHY EARLY INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT IS IMPORTANT

Mental illness can be successfully treated.

Treatment helps most people feel better and stay better.

Treatment can relieve symptoms and many people recover completely. For some people recovery is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life. For others recovery is the reduction or complete remission of symptoms.

Early treatment can prevent more serious problems and can lead to the development of additional mental illnesses.

If left untreated, a mental illness can be even more difficult to treat.

If left untreated, mental illness can lead to school failure, family conflict, violence, unnecessary disability, substance abuse, homelessness, incarceration, and suicide. It can be very costly to families, communities, and the health care system.

WHO YA GONNA CALL
WHERE YOU CAN GO TO FOR HELP AND SUPPORT

FAMILY MEMBERS OR OTHER TRUSTED ADULTS

RELIGIOUS LEADERS

TEACHERS, COUNSELOR, OR OTHER SCHOOL STAFF
Principal
School Counselors
School Nurse

LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH EXPERTS & COMMUNITY RESOURCES
Family Doctor
Private Counselor or Therapist
Hospital)
Crisis Day/Night
Psychotherapist
Health Department
Teen Line 1-800-479-8336 (Mon-Fri 6:00 P.M. - 10 P.M.)

STATE/NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES
Primary Children's Medical Center Crisis Referral 1-801-265-3049
LDS Mental Health- www.ldsmentalhealth.org
NAMI Utah- 801-323.9900 or 877.230.6264 (www.namiut.org)
National Hopeline Network- 1-800-442-4673 (HOPE)
National Suicide Prevention Hotline- 1-800-784-2433(SUICIDE)

National TalkLine 1-800-999-9999

There is hope. There is help available.