

What to Know About a New Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder, Major Depression, or Schizophrenia

Experiencing a Serious Mental Illness Is Not Your Fault

Just like having a serious physical health condition, experiencing SMI is not your fault nor is it the fault of people in your life. It is not caused by one event that you could have prevented. This diagnosis does not indicate you did anything wrong. SMI does not, cannot, and will not define you.

Research suggests that SMI can be the result of a specific interplay of two factors. The interaction of the two factors is very complex and does not always lead to serious mental illness.

 **Genetics**
➔ Biochemical processes and the brain structure you were born with

 **Environment**
➔ Exposure to stressful or traumatic events

Serious Mental Illness Is Common



Approximately

1 in 25

U.S. adults experiences SMI in a given year¹

That adds up to

10.4 million people

age 18 or older¹



The signs of SMI can begin at any age – from **childhood** through later **adult** years

Most people **start experiencing symptoms** before they turn

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- ➔ All people have different experiences with SMI – even people with the same diagnosis as you
- ➔ All people who experience SMI share a profound sense of empathy – for each other, their families, and you
- ➔ When you live with SMI, you are never alone – help, support, and compassion is always there with a click, call, or support group meeting

Options Exist for Treatment

- ➔ You can reduce many of your symptoms if you get treatment as soon as possible
- ➔ Treatment is different for each person and each diagnosis – there is no single plan that works for everyone
- ➔ Treatment options include therapy, medications, self-care, social support, and education
- ➔ Talk with your health care provider to determine your options

The journey to improved health and functioning is different for each person. Many things are possible when you start treatment early and play an active role in your treatment. For example, this journey may mean that you:

- ➔ Participate in more pleasurable activities
- ➔ Enjoy the company of friends and family
- ➔ Feel better physically and mentally

Serious Mental Illness Is Not the End of Your Story

Each day, people get better from the symptoms of SMI and return to doing things that they enjoy and that are important to them. SMI can slow you down, but it shouldn't stop you.



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CLINICIANS ▾ INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES ▾ ABOUT US CALENDAR CONTACT 🔍

FIND THE ANSWERS YOU NEED IN OUR KNOWLEDGE BASE

Search topics, find resources, and enhance what you know about SMI.



Have More Questions?

Visit the SMI Adviser Knowledge Base at <https://smiadviser.org/kbp>

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