

# Mental Illness and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living



United Way of Olmsted County  
903 W. Center Street, Suite 100  
Rochester, MN 55902  
507-287-2000

United Way  
of Olmsted County  
[uwolmsted.org](http://uwolmsted.org)



## **Prevalence of People with Mental Illness**

Mental illness does not discriminate between age, race and SES, as nationally approximately 1 in 5 adults, 43.8 million, experience mental illness in a given year. Meanwhile, about 1 in 25 adults, 9.8 million, experience a serious mental illness in any given year that substantially impacts or limits a person's major life activities. In youth aged 13-18, about 1 in 5 experiences a severe mental illness. Demographics (middle aged, women, and younger men), behaviors (substance use and contact with criminal justice system), lifestyles (working patterns, caring responsibilities, social support networks, and ex-military), and comorbidity (learning disability, cognitive impairment, postnatal period, and chronic physical health) can all impact a person's mental health (National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2018).

## **Cleaning and maintaining a house**

Depending on the diagnosis a person may have, it may create barriers in maintaining and cleaning a house. For example, cleanliness may look different for a person who hoards as opposed to a person diagnosed with OCD. Another barrier experienced by many with a mental illness diagnosis is a general lack of motivation to complete tasks that need to be done daily/weekly. Mental health difficulties sometimes make life challenging and can impair motivations. When a person is handling mental illness, he/she may find it hard to be enthusiastic about completing chores and taking care of his/her environment (Croft, 2015).

## **Moving Within the Community**

Individuals diagnosed with mental illness are sometimes unable to drive due to varying circumstances. With that, individuals would benefit from having access to public transportation and being aware of different transportation services available to them. Accessing transportation is an important activity for people with mental illness because they need to be able to attend appointments, meet with workers, connect to stores to purchase groceries and pick up medications, and also partake in different hobbies and extracurricular activities (Mitchell & Selmes, 2007). Transportation also reduces isolation as it connects the individual to their supports and is a means of remaining independent.

## **Preparing meals**

As stated before, sometimes there is a lack of motivation to prepare meals for oneself due to the impacts of a person's diagnosis. Furthermore, it is

important for individuals diagnosed with mental illness to understand nutrition and how nutrition can impact brain health and overall health. Some individuals have not been taught that nutrition can impact short term and long term mental health. Nutrition has been linked in assisting management and prevention of specific mental health problems such as depression, schizophrenia, ADHS, and Alzheimer's disease (Mental Health Foundation, 2018).

## **Medications**

Approximately 3 in 5 American adults take at least one medication daily, and about half of patients with a mental illness do not take their medications as prescribed. Non-adherence of medications can create negative health consequences ranging from decreased quality of life to poorly managed mental health symptoms. Medication adherence is influenced by different environmental factors including a patient's perception of medication and motivation to take the medication. It is also important for an individual to correctly adhere to their medication(s) by taking medication at the correct time, taking the correct dosage, and avoid abusing the medications (Zullig & Bosworth, 2017).

## **Communication**

Communication is important for a person diagnosed with a mental illness. Communication may look differently for people diagnosed with mental illness as they need to advocate for him/herself regarding treatment, reducing stigma, personal wants, and personal needs. A person diagnosed with mental illness may find it difficult to advocate for him/herself if he/she is not able to communicate assertively or has poor social skills. Locating positive support groups can be beneficial for people diagnosed with mental illness because it promotes well-being and social interactions. Lastly, people diagnosed with mental illness may have to overcome moderate to extreme anxiety in social settings, which can be daunting when communicating with others in social settings.

## **Sources**

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