

# WALK IN MY SHOES

WHAT  
IS

MENTAL  
HEALTH?

All aspects of our lives are affected by our Mental Health - it is how we think, feel and act as we face life's situations and challenges, how we handle stress, relate to one another and make decisions. It also influences the way we look at ourselves, our lives and others in our lives.

Like physical health, Mental Health is important at every stage of life.

When untreated, Mental Health disorders can lead to school, college or work failure, family conflicts, drug abuse, violence, and even suicide.

"Mental Health Disorders" refers to the range of all diagnosable emotional, behavioural, and mental health disorders, including:

- > Depression
- > Attention-deficit/hyperactivity Disorder
- > Anxiety Disorders
- > Eating Disorders
- > Bipolar Affective Disorder
- > Addictions
- > Psychosis

25% of people will experience a mental health difficulty within their lifetime

## Causes of Mental Health Disorders?

Mental Health disorders can be influenced by:

**Biological factors which can include:**

- > Genetics
- > Chemical imbalances in the body, or
- > Damage to the central nervous system, such as a head injury.

**Environmental factors such as:**

- > Exposure to violence, such as witnessing or being a victim of physical or sexual abuse,
- > Financial strain,
- > The loss of something important (person, pet) through death, separation or travel.
- > Bullying: in school, in college, at work, in the community or online.
- > Relationships stress.
- > Unhealthy lifestyle choices.

Mental Health Disorders Affect  
**1** in every **4**  
people  
at any given time

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St. Patrick's  
Hospital  
FOUNDATION

# WALK IN MY SHOES

ABOUT

ST. PATRICK'S UNIVERSITY  
HOSPITAL & THE FOUNDATION

## St. Patrick's University Hospital

It is over 250 years since Jonathan Swift, author of Gulliver's Travels, founded St. Patrick's Hospital.

His vision was to create a hospital to provide treatment to people experiencing mental health difficulties.

Today, St. Patrick's University Hospital is Ireland's largest independent mental health service provider. It is a Not-for-Profit organisation dedicated to providing the highest quality of mental health care, promoting mental health and the rights of those who suffer from mental illness.

Now the need for mental health services is greater than ever. **One in four** people in Ireland will suffer from mental difficulties at some stage in their lives, and countless families and friends are affected by it.



## St. Patrick's University Hospital Foundation CHY no: 6276

The Foundation is the fundraising body of St. Patrick's University Hospital. The Foundation is responsible for raising funds to develop and provide access to mental health services.

By donating to the Foundation you are supporting the provision of the highest quality mental health services to those who need them most. Funds raised by the Foundation support the following key areas:

- Access to quality mental health care.
- Prevention Initiatives.
- Anti- Stigma Campaigns.

St. Patrick's University Hospital provides a wide range of programmes and services delivering therapeutic treatment and care to patients. Some of these include:

- Adolescent Services for young people aged 13-17.
- Young Adult Services for those aged 18-25.
- Eating Disorder Programme.
- Psychiatry of Later Life which focuses on mental health of older people.
- Addiction Services.
- The Dean Clinics – unique community-based mental health centres.
- Free Support & Information line – a free service, operated by mental health professionals, is available to all. T: 01 249 3333.

St. Patrick's offers a specialist Young Adult service dedicated to 18-25 year olds who are experiencing mental health difficulties. The service helps young adults develop positive coping mechanisms and skills.

The aim is to support young adults to achieve their highest potential despite their mental health difficulties. i.e. college, employment.

THE FOCUS OF CARE AND  
TREATMENT IS TO RETURN THE  
PERSON TO AN ACTIVE SOCIAL,  
PERSONAL AND WORK LIFE AS  
SOON AS POSSIBLE.

“PEOPLE  
CAN  
AND DO  
RECOVER!”



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# WALK IN MY SHOES

WORKING

& MENTAL  
HEALTH?

Did you know that **1 in 4** people suffer from a mental health difficulty. For example, it might be depression, anxiety, addiction, eating disorders, self-harm or stress.

Nearly 5% of young people need help from mental health professionals - such as doctors, nurses, therapists, counsellors.

Over 75% of adults with mental illness first experienced symptoms before the age of 25. Research shows that early intervention and treatment is key to recovery.

**1 IN 6** IRISH EMPLOYEES SUFFER FROM MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

**TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IS IMPORTANT**  
**A SIMPLE CONVERSATION CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE**

If you suffer with depression you feel like nobody understands what you're going through but that simply isn't true. Never give up and never give into the thought that it would be easier if your life ended. Life is a gift. We all suffer at some point in our lives but that doesn't mean that we always will. There is always hope, there is always the chance of a better day tomorrow so never give up because we're all worth something to someone even if we don't believe it ourselves.

*Written by Jack, who attended the Young Adult Service at St. Patrick's Hospital.*

## WORK STRESS

Have you noticed any of the following signs over a 2 – 4 week period?

- > Too many things to do at once / too many decisions?
- > Have you had difficulties concentrating?
- > Forgetting about arranged meetings / deadlines?
- > Not taking breaks or lunch?
- > Feeling less confident about your work?
- > Feeling afraid, overwhelmed or tearful in work?
- > Feeling irritated by colleagues / work tasks?
- > Bringing work home? Dreaming about work?

**41% OF SERVICE USERS SURVEYED SAID THEY WOULD NOT DISCUSS THEIR MENTAL ILLNESS WITH THEIR EMPLOYER**  
**IDENTIFY A TRUSTED COLLEAGUE THAT YOU CAN CONFIDE IN.**

There is a difference between work place pressures and work related stress.  
We must acknowledge that day to day pressure is often part of a person's work life.  
But pressure can maintain productivity, stress does not.

## HOW TO MANAGE WORK STRESS:

- > Make your environment more comfortable
- > Schedule and take regular breaks
- > Leave your work station and move around
- > Eat nutritious food, avoid high sugar contents
- > Try to take a break every quarter
- > Separate your technological link with work when at home
- > Confide in a trusted colleague
- > Develop and maintain some work life balance
- > Take regular exercise
- > Breathe, take deep breaths regularly



# WALK IN MY SHOES

WATCH  
OUT FOR

THE WARNING  
SIGNS

**HOW TO SPOT THE SIGNS?**  
WATCH OUT FOR YOURSELF, YOUR FRIENDS, FAMILY AND WORK  
COLLEAGUES IF YOU RECOGNISE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING  
**WARNING SIGNS IT'S TIME TO SEEK HELP**

## FEELINGS

- Sad and hopeless without reason for a long time
- Angry, crying, over-reacting most of the time
- Feeling worthless or guilty often
- Being anxious or worried often
- Unable to cope with the loss of someone or something important
- Extremely fearful, unexplained fears
- Worried about being harmed, hurting others
- Concerned about physical appearance or physical problems
- Feeling life is too hard to handle/ having suicidal thoughts

## EXPERIENCES

- Increasingly declining performance in school, college, work
- Losing interest in things once enjoyed
- Unexplained changes in sleeping patterns
- Unexplained changes in eating patterns
- Avoiding friends, family
- Wanting to be alone all of the time
- Daydreaming too much/ poor concentration
- Frightened that his/ her mind is out of control/ or controlled
- Hearing voices that cannot be explained
- Persistent nightmares

## BEHAVIOUR

- Poor concentration, unable to think straight
- Inability to sit still or focus attention
- Compulsive need to wash, clean things, perform routines numerous times daily to avoid unsubstantiated danger
- Over talkative, disjointed conversations

## ACTIONS (causing problems)

- Using/ abusing/ depending on alcohol or drugs
- Finding ways to eat large amounts of food or abusing laxatives to avoid weight gain. Dieting/ exercising excessively
- Excessive risk taking
- Doing things that can be life threatening

**YOUNG PEOPLE  
WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES  
NEED TO GET HELP  
AS SOON AS POSSIBLE  
EARLY INTERVENTION  
AND TREATMENT  
IS KEY TO RECOVERY**

## WHAT TO DO

**ASKING FOR HELP IS A SIGN OF STRENGTH NOT WEAKNESS**

St. Patrick's University Hospital: Free Support and Information Centre: 01 249 3333

Dean Clinic [Providing free assessments]: Helpline: 01 249 3590

Aware [Helping defeat depression]:

Helpline: 1890 303302

[www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie)

Bodywhys

[The eating Disorders Association of Ireland]

Helpline: 1890 200 444 [www.bodywhys.ie](http://www.bodywhys.ie)

[le.reachout.com](http://le.reachout.com) an online service to help young people aged 16 – 25

Samaritans Helpline: 1850 6060 90

Shine [Supporting people affected by Mental Health]

Helpline: 1890 621 631 [www.shineonline.ie](http://www.shineonline.ie)

Console [Bereaved by suicide]

Helpline: 1800 201 890 [www.console.ie](http://www.console.ie)

Pieta house

[Centre for prevention of self harm & suicide]

Helpline: 01 601 000 [www.pieta.ie](http://www.pieta.ie)

National LGBT Helpline: 1890 929 539

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