

MENTAL HEALTH

A strong support system is an essential part of care for mental health issues

‘At first I did not know what was happening to me, I thought someone was talking behind my back. I could not sleep well; I even withdrew from my colleagues, fearing that they might be talking about me. Finally, my friend thought I was not right and suggested that I get help. It was because of him that I went to see a social worker, who then referred me to a psychiatrist. Now, I know that the earlier I get treated, the better chance for me to have a successful outcome and I don’t have to stress myself out.’

Sometimes people do not want to believe that they or someone in their family has a mental illness. Often, this is because they are afraid of how others will think of them if they found out about their mental illness. But delaying treatment may only make the situation worse.

Myths of Mental Illness

There are some community prejudices around mental illness and one of these is that mental illness is closely linked to violence, but in fact, people who are mentally ill are no more violent than other people. Another idea is that mental illness is caused by a personality weakness but this is not true either. Mental illness is not anyone’s fault just like diabetes or heart disease is not anyone’s fault.

Mental illness is nothing to be afraid of. Some people think that mental illness would either keep coming back or would never go away. We now know that mental illness, just like physical illness, is treatable. Treatments include medication, counselling and stress management etc. Although sometimes a person may need to stay in hospital for a while to be treated, most people can be treated while they remain in their home. Besides professional treatment, support from family members as well as the community can help to produce positive outcomes. Without understanding and acceptance, many mentally ill people and their families will try to hide the illness from their community. This can make families feel very isolated and can make the illness worse.



Understanding Mental Illness for Early Detection and Treatment

The first step towards change is understanding mental illness. Mental health problems can take different shapes and forms at different times. Behaviour that is unusual for the person may be a symptom of mental illness, just as a cough can be a symptom of flu. Other people may feel anxious and fearful, or seem sad much of the time; some may hear voices, see things that aren’t there or believe things that aren’t true.

Try to learn more about the mental illness. Early detection of the illness allows the patient and his/her family members to get appropriate help as early as possible. In this way, they can work with the health service provider in finding out the accurate diagnosis which will result in the right treatment and best care.

Access Mental Health

Let me introduce an excellent service which assists callers in navigating the wide range of mental health services within the Calgary Health Region. If you have a question about mental health or unsure of where to get help, you can call Access Mental Health!

By calling the Access Mental Health, you are able to get detailed information regarding mental health services including how to access them, referral requirements, cost and hours of operation.

Anyone can call **403-943-1500** for information regarding mental health services in the Calgary Health Region. Press 1 if you are calling about a child or teenager and press 2 if you are calling about an adult or senior. Do not hang up. When someone answers the phone, tell them what language you speak and an interpreter will be arranged for you. Access Mental Health is open Monday to Friday 8:00am-7:00pm. After that time and on weekends, you may leave a message and staff will call you back. However, it is not a crisis service. If the caller is in crisis, they will be connected with an appropriate option.



Got a mental health question?
Not sure where to get help?
Call us!



ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH

Our professional staff will help people of all ages to:

- Get mental health information
- Understand the options for mental health support
- Connect with local community resources
- Connect to mental health services within the Calgary Health Region

943-1500



calgary health region

Got a mental health question? Call us!

ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH

Open: Mon - Fri 7:30am - 7:00pm
Phone: 943-1500 (voice mail after hours)
Fax: 943-7044
Email: mental.health@calgaryhealthregion.ca