MENTAL HEALTH

What is mental illness?

A mental illness is a disease that causes mild to severe disturbances in thought and/or behavior, resulting in an inability to cope with life's ordinary demands and routines. There are more than 200 classified forms of mental illness. Some of the more common disorders are depression, bipolar disorder, dementia, schizophrenia and anxiety disorders. Symptoms may include changes in mood, personality, personal habits and/or social withdrawal.

Mental health problems may be related to excessive stress due to a particular situation or series of events. As with cancer, diabetes and heart disease, mental illnesses are often physical as well as emotional and psychological. Mental illnesses may be caused by a reaction to environmental stresses, genetic factors, biochemical imbalances, or a combination of these. With proper care and treatment many individuals learn to cope or recover from a mental illness or emotional disorder.

Warning Signs and Symptoms

The following are signs that your loved one may want to speak to a medical or mental health professional.

In adults:

- Confused thinking
- Prolonged depression (sadness or irritability)
- Feelings of extreme highs and lows
- Excessive fears, worries and anxieties
- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Strong feelings of anger
- Delusions or hallucinations
- Growing inability to cope with daily problems and activities
- Suicidal thoughts
- Denial of obvious problems
- Numerous unexplained physical ailments
- Substance abuse

In older children and pre-adolescents:

- Substance abuse
- Inability to cope with problems and daily activities
- Changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- Excessive complaints of physical ailments
- Defiance of authority, truancy, theft, and/or vandalism
• Intense fear of weight gain
• Prolonged negative mood, often accompanied by poor appetite or thoughts of death
• Frequent outbursts of anger

In younger children:
• Changes in school performance
• Poor grades despite strong efforts
• Excessive worry or anxiety (i.e. refusing to go to bed or school)
• Hyperactivity
• Persistent nightmares
• Persistent disobedience or aggression
• Frequent temper tantrums

Most people believe that mental disorders are rare and “happen to someone else.” In fact, mental disorders are common and widespread. An estimated 54 million Americans suffer from some form of mental disorder in a given year.

Most families are not prepared to cope with learning their loved one has a mental illness. It can be physically and emotionally trying, and can make us feel vulnerable to the opinions and judgments of others.

If you think you or someone you know may have a mental or emotional problem, it is important to remember there is hope and help.

Available Resources

Psychiatric Services in Travis County:

If you or someone you now is having a medical emergency: CALL 911.
If you or someone you know is experiencing a mental health crisis:
CALL PES at 472-HELP.
He/she can also be taken to a hospital Emergency Room for if necessary.

Austin Travis County Integral Care Services (ATCIC – formerly MHMR) & Psychiatric Emergency Services (PES)*
Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Services
1631 E. 2nd St., Austin, TX 78702
(512) 472-4357 ext. 4 Main Intake for all ATCIC Services (472-HELP)
www.integralcare.org

*PES is the one intake facility for ALL ATCIC/MHMR services in Travis County.*
PES is a walk-in psychiatric emergency service clinic open 24/7 and is staffed by licensed clinicians, psychiatrists, nurses, and qualified mental health professionals. PES provides psychiatric assessment, crisis intervention, linkage with resources, and physician services to children/youth and adults experiencing psychiatric distress. PES works like the 24/7 Crisis Hotline, in that it is where individuals can go for an initial assessment for services. PES staff works closely with other ATCIC programs, local emergency rooms, and the Crisis
Intervention Teams (CIT) of Austin Police Department and Travis County Sheriff’s Department.

### Outpatient Services

**Austin Travis County Integral Care Services (ATCIC – formerly MHMR)**  
1631 E. 2nd St., Austin, TX 78702  
(512) 472-4357 ext. 4

**Lone Star Circle of Care**  
Psychiatry and Behavioral Health Services  
3950 N. A.W. Grimes Boulevard Suite N102  
Round Rock, TX 78665  
(512) 524-9273 Main  
(877) 800-5722 Toll Free  
[www.lscctx.org](http://www.lscctx.org)

**Hill Country Counseling Center**  
1433 Fairfield Dr., Austin, TX 78758  
(512) 491-8444 Main  
[www.hillcountrycmhc.com](http://www.hillcountrycmhc.com)

**Seton Shoal Creek Hospital - Outpatient Assessment and Referral**  
(512) 324-2039

### Inpatient Psychiatric Hospitals

**Seton Shoal Creek Hospital (private hospital)**  
Adult and adolescent psychiatric services  
3501 Mills Avenue, Austin, TX 78731  
(512) 324-2000

**Austin Lakes Hospital (Private hospital)**  
Adult psychiatric services  
1025 East 32nd Street, Austin, TX 78705  
(512) 544-5253

**Austin State Hospital (State funded and managed)**  
Adult and adolescent psychiatric services  
4110 Guadalupe Street, Austin, TX 78751  
(512) 452-0381

### Helpful Websites

- Crisis Chat: [www.crisischat.org](http://www.crisischat.org)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)
- National Institute of Mental Health: [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Texas: [www.dbsatexas.org](http://www.dbsatexas.org)
- Texas Dept. of State Health Services – Mental Health: [www.dshs.state.tx.us/mentalhealth.shtm](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mentalhealth.shtm)

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