

# **MENTAL** **Illness** **and** **You**

**Why You  
Should Know  
About It**

**MENTAL HEALTH**



**Stop exclusion  
Dare to care**



**Practise Good  
Mental Health**

## WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

It's a disturbance of the mind that may interfere with normal behaviour and makes daily life difficult. It includes all kinds of emotional and mental conditions and can affect persons of any age and in any family.

There are different types of mental illness, e.g. schizophrenia, depression and organic brain disorders. Mental illness may range from mild to disabling impairments and almost all communities are affected in some way. People with mental illness are usually of normal intelligence although their illness may make it difficult to function at a normal level.



## EARLY SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS:

- Silent, listless, withdrawn behaviour, often depressed and sad for no apparent reason
- Suspicion without cause, irrational fears (paranoia)
- Anxiety over imagined problems
- Sudden mood changes, temper outbursts
- Poor work performance
- Inability to make decisions
- Hears, sees imaginary thing (hallucinations)
- Physical ailments, headaches, insomnia
- Loses interests in self, job, family.

## **HOW IT AFFECTS THE FAMILY**

It is a family problem - most people are either directly or indirectly affected.

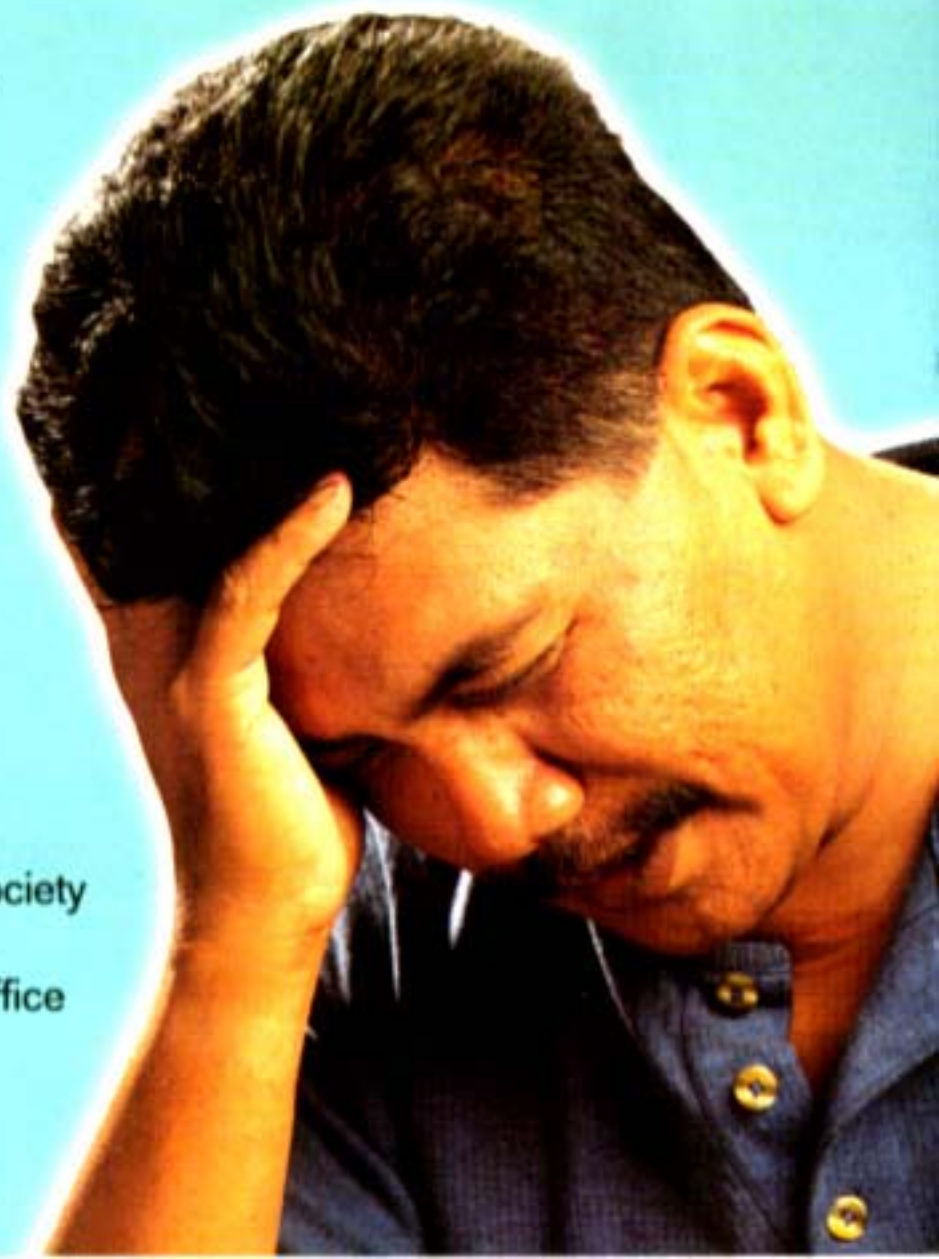
It creates emotional, social and financial problems

Family members experience some or all of the following:

- Denial ( pretend there is nothing wrong )
- Guilt (they blame themselves)
- Fear and worry
- Hostility and anger
- Symptoms of loss
- Helplessness

## **WHERE TO GO FOR HELP**

- Health clinics
- Hospitals
- Local mental health society
- School, college and office counselling services



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW SUFFERS FROM MENTAL ILLNESS?



- Accept the person and his illness. Do not let other people call them strange names
- Be open, understanding, caring and supportive
- Learn the facts, read, ask questions
- Help them get suitable jobs
- Get professional help
- Assist persons with a mental illness to live a better life
- Assists organisations and agencies providing service for the mentally ill