

World Mental Health Day

October 10th 2005



WMHDay

“Seventeenth century philosopher Rene Descartes conceptualised the distinction between the mind and the body. He viewed the mind as completely separate from the body. And for almost two centuries mental health advocates have been trying to put them back together. The separation between mental and physical health has no real relevance to the scientific understanding of health in the 21st century; mind and body are inseparable; health is a complete state of well-being and there is no health without mental health”.

Mrs. Shona Sturgeon, WFMH President

World Mental Health Day is a global mental health education, awareness and advocacy project of World Federation for Mental Health, a global mental health organization with members and contacts in more than 150 countries.



AstraZeneca is one of the world's leading research-based pharmaceutical companies with a long term commitment to neuroscience, and in association with the World Federation for Mental Health, is proud to be a sponsor of World Mental Health Day 2005.

www.astrazeneca.com www.wmhdday.net www.wfmh.org

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‘Mental and physical health across the life span’



The theme of this year's World Mental Health Day is mental and physical health across the life span, emphasizing the importance of recognizing the inter-dependence of good mental and physical health at every stage of life.

Poor physical health, whether in infancy, childhood, adulthood or in the later years of life, can interfere with emotional health and well-being, while serious mental illnesses and disorders such as depression or anxiety often result in neglect of serious physical health issues such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis and respiratory illness. This year's World Mental Health Day theme stresses the important fact that “there is no health without mental health,” and urges increased awareness and understanding that good physical and good mental health are important for successful growth and development at all stages of life.

‘There is no health without mental health’



Myth: Psychiatric conditions are not true medical illnesses like heart disease and diabetes – they are personality disorders.

Fact: Disorders of the brain are no less medical conditions than disorders of the heart or kidneys. Research has shown that there are genetic and biological causes for psychiatric conditions and they can be treated effectively.

Myth: People with a severe mental illness such as schizophrenia are usually dangerous and violent.

Fact: Statistics show that violence in people who have a brain disorder is not much higher than in the general population. People with psychotic illnesses like schizophrenia are far more frequently frightened, confused and despairing than violent.

Myth: Schizophrenia is a multiple personality disorder.

Fact: Schizophrenia is a serious mental illness, often confused with multiple personality disorder. In fact, it is a condition that blurs the distinction between what is real and what is imagined. People with schizophrenia have symptoms ranging from social withdrawal to delusions and hallucinations but are often helped by modern medicines.

Myth: People with manic depression are dangerously unstable and generally drop out of society.

Fact: Manic depression – or bipolar disorder – is one of the most serious mental illnesses, causing severe distress and destroying personal relationships. Yet many people with bipolar disorder lead full and meaningful lives. Indeed, some of the most brilliant creative geniuses are thought to have suffered from bipolar disorder including the writers Ernest Hemingway, Graham Greene and Virginia Woolf; statesman Winston Churchill, actress Vivienne Leigh and comedian Spike Milligan.

Myth: Mental illness cannot affect me

Fact: Mental illnesses are surprisingly common and do not discriminate – they can affect anyone. In a 2004 World Health Organisation survey of over 60,000 adults in 14 countries worldwide, 9 to 17 percent of those interviewed had had some episode of mental illness in the last year.^{1,2}

1. JAMA. 2004 Jun 2; 291(21):2581-90

2. www.dienekes.com/blog/archives/000579.html

Useful support groups

EUFAMI www.eufami.org

(European Association of Families of Mentally Ill People)

GAMIAN EUROPE www.gamian.org

(The Global Alliance of Mental Illness Advocacy Networks)