

Mental Health Awareness Manual

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I Had a Black dog



I had a Black Dog and his name is depression. Looking back, Black dog had been in and out of my life since early twenties. Whenever he made an appearance, I felt empty and life just seems to slow down. Black dog could surprise me with no visit or no apparent reason or occasion. He could make me look and feel older than my years. When the rest of the world seemed enjoying life. I could only see it through the Black Dog. Activities that brought me pleasure suddenly ceased to, Black Dog liked to ruin my appetite, he chewed up my memory and my ability to concentrate. Doing anything or going somewhere with Black Dog required superhuman strength. If Black Dog accompanied me to a social occasion, he would sniff out what confidence I had and chase it away. my biggest fear was being found out. I worried that people might judge me because of the shame and stigma associated with Black Dog. I become champion at fooling everyone, both at home and at school. Keeping up an emotional lie takes an incredible amount of energy. Its like trying to cover up epilepsy, a heart attack, or diabetes. Black Dog could make me say negative things. He could make my voice weak and without conviction. Black Dog could make me irritable and difficult to be around. Black Dog thought nothing of taking my love and burying my intimacy, he liked to wake me up with very repetitive, negative thinking. Having a

Black Dog in your life isn't so much about feeling a bit down, sad or blue. At its worst, it's about being devoid of feeling together. As the years went by, A Black Dog got bigger and started hanging around all the time. I would say THAT'S IT!! and attack him with whatever I thought might send him running. But not often than not, he would come out on top. Going down become easier than getting up again. Eventually I become quite good self-medication which never really helped. I began to feel totally isolated from everything and everyone. Black Dog finally succeeded in hijacking my life; he brought me to my knees. My will to go on had deserted me. which was the time I sought professional help and got a clinical diagnosis. This was my first step towards recovery and a major turning point in my life. I discovered that there are many different breads of Black Dog affecting millions of people from all walks of life. The Black Dog is an equal opportunity mongrel. I learnt that there are many different ways to treat Black Dog. I also learnt that there is no quick fix. Medication can be a necessary part of the treatment for some; others may need a different approach altogether. Black Dog had made me to believe that if I ever told about him, I would be judged. The truth is, being emotionally genuine with cloth friends and family can be an absolute life saver. Letting the Dog out is far better than keeping him in. i learnt not to be afraid of A Black Dog and thought him a few tricks of my own. Black Dog feeds on stress end fatigue, the more stressed you get the louder he barks. its important to learn how to rest properly and quite your mind. yoga, meditation and being In natural can help shut out the Dog. Black Dog is fat and lazy, he would far rather you lie on your bed and feel sorry for yourself. He hates exercise mostly because it makes you feel better. When you least feel like moving is when you should move the most. So go for a walk or run and leave the mutt behind. Keeping a mood journal can be very useful. Getting your thought on paper is highly liberating and often insightful. Working out some sort of symbol for making how you are feeling each day, is a good way to keep track of the Dog. The most important thing to remember is that no matter had bad it gets, if you take the right steps, Black Dog days can and will pass. I wouldn't say that I'm grateful for having Black Dog in my life but what I have lost to him; I have gained in another ways. He forced me to reevaluate and simplify problems it's better to acknowledge and even embrace them. Black Dog may always be a part of my life but I have learnt that with patience, humor, knowledge and discipline even the worst Black Dog can be made to heal.

Use I had a Black Dog story video

It's important to acknowledge we all have mental health and personal responsibilities to learn how we can improve and maintain our wellbeing.



Use what is mental health video

Activity #1: Learning the Fact

Objectives: (1) participants will understand key characteristics of mental illness.

Time: 10 minutes

Materials: chart paper with markers for each team

ENGAGE

Ask students "how many of you have been sick in the last year?" How were you sick? How long were you sick? Take 3 - 5 responses. Reinforce that students (1) describing physical symptoms (headache, fever, chills, upset stomach, etc.); (2) sought help from a doctor; (3) took medicine; and (4) recovered.

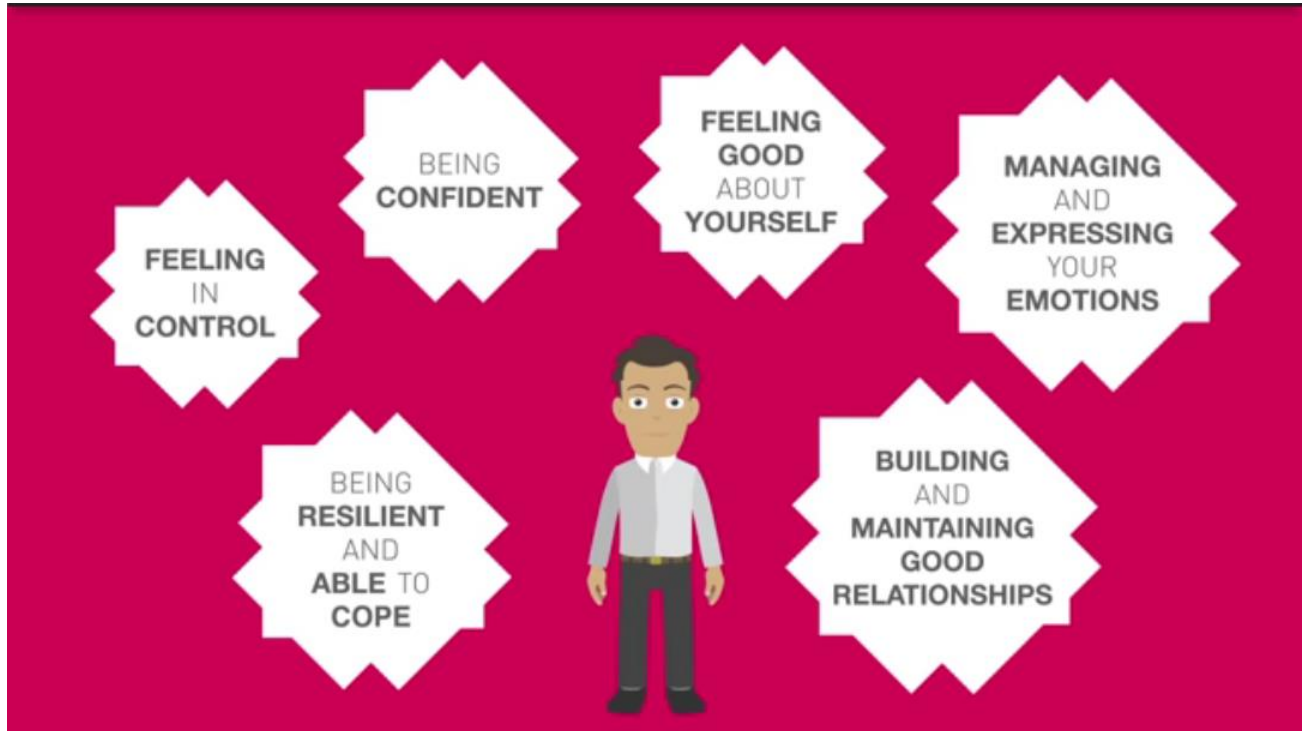
DO/EXPERIENCE

(1) Explain that just like being physically ill, persons with a mental illness have symptoms, can seek help, may take medicine, and can recover.

(2) Divide the class into different groups. Tell the class that you will watch a video about mental health and mental illness and then asking teams to respond to questions about what you watch. Give each team a chart paper and marker to use display answers to the game questions. Each team will write on their flipchart what they think is the correct answer.

In many ways, mental health is just like physical health:

Mental illness on the other hand refers to diagnosable mental disorders that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or a combination thereof) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.”

[illegible]

2 What are mental health problems?

There are many different mental health problems. Some of them have similar symptoms, so you may experience the symptoms of more than one mental health problem, or be given several diagnoses at once. Or you might not have any particular diagnosis, but still be finding things very difficult. Everyone's experience is different and can change at different times.

Some of mental health problem



Use what are mental health problems video

Depression

Depression is a feeling of low mood that lasts for a long time and affects your everyday life. It can make you feel hopeless, despairing, guilty, worthless, unmotivated and exhausted. It can affect your sleep, appetite, sex drive and your physical health. In its mildest form, depression doesn't stop you leading a normal life, but it makes everything harder to do and seem less worthwhile. At its most severe, depression can make you feel suicidal and be life-threatening.

Anxiety

Anxiety is what we feel when we are worried, tense or afraid – particularly about things that are about to happen, or which we think could happen in the future. Occasional anxiety is a normal human experience. But if your feelings of anxiety are very strong, or last for a long time, they can be overwhelming. You might also experience physical symptoms such as sleep problems and panic attacks. You might be diagnosed with a particular anxiety disorder, such as generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), social anxiety (social phobia), panic disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). But it's also possible to experience problems with anxiety without having a specific diagnosis.

Phobias

A phobia is an extreme form of fear or anxiety triggered by a particular situation (such as going outside) or object (such as spiders), even when it's very unlikely to be dangerous. A fear becomes a phobia if the fear is out of proportion to the danger; it lasts for more than six months, and has a significant impact on how you live your day-to-day life.

Eating problems

Eating problems are not just about food. It can be about difficult things and painful feelings which you may be finding hard to face or resolve. Lots of people think that if you have an eating problem you will be over- or underweight, and that being a certain weight is always associated with a specific eating problem, but this is a myth. Anyone, regardless of age, gender or weight, can be affected by eating problems. The most common eating disorder diagnoses are anorexia, bulimia, binge eating disorder, and other specified feeding or eating disorder (OSFED). But it's also possible to have a very difficult relationship with food and not fit the criteria for any specific diagnosis.

Schizophrenia

Views on schizophrenia have changed over the years. Lots of people question whether it's really a distinct condition, or actually a few different conditions that overlap. But you may still be given this diagnosis if you experience symptoms such as:

- Psychosis (such as hallucinations or delusions)
- disorganized thinking and speech
- Feeling disconnected from your feelings
- difficulty concentrating

Wanting to avoid people a
lack of interest in things

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)

Obsessive-compulsive disorder is a type of anxiety disorder. The term is often misused in daily conversation – for example, you might hear people talk about being 'a bit OCD', if they like things to be neat and tidy. But the reality of this disorder is a lot more complex and serious. OCD has two main parts **obsessions** (unwelcome thoughts, images, urges, worries or doubts that repeatedly appear in your mind; and **compulsions** (repetitive activities that you feel you have to do to reduce the anxiety caused by the obsession).

Personality disorders

Personality disorder is a type of mental health problem where your attitudes, beliefs and behaviors cause you longstanding problems in your life. If you have this diagnosis it doesn't mean that you're fundamentally different from other people – but you may regularly experience difficulties with how you think about yourself and others, and find it very difficult to change these unwanted patterns. There are several different categories and types of personality disorder.

3, what causes mental health problems?

Mental health problems can have a wide range of causes. It's likely that for many people there is a complicated combination of factors – although different people may be more deeply affected by certain things than others. For example, the following factors could potentially result in a period of poor mental health:

Do mental health problems run in families?

Research suggests that some mental health problems may run in families. For example, if you have a parent with schizophrenia you are more likely to develop schizophrenia yourself. But no one knows if this is because of our genes or because of other factors, such as the environment we grow up in, or the ways of thinking, coping and behaving that we may learn from our parents.

Although the development of some mental health problems may be influenced by our genes, researchers haven't found any specific genes that definitely cause mental health problems. And many

people who experience a mental health problem don't have any parents, children or other relatives with the same condition.

- Childhood abuse, trauma
- Social isolation or loneliness
- Experiencing discrimination and stigma
- social disadvantage, poverty
- Bereavement (losing someone close to you)
- severe or long-term stress
- Having a long-term physical health condition
- unemployment or losing your job
- Drug alcohol misuse
- Domestic violence, bullying or other abuse as an adult

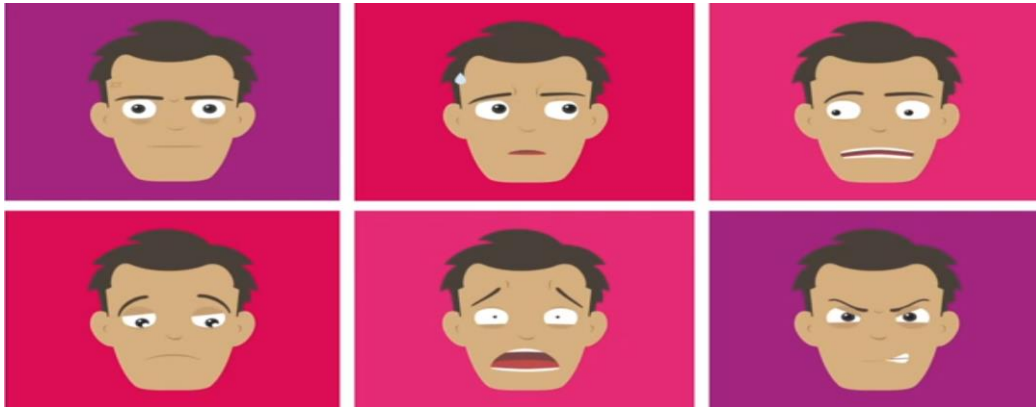
Significant trauma as an adult, such as military combat, being involved in a serious incident in which you feared for your life, or being the victim of a violent crime Physical causes for example, a head injury or a neurological condition such as epilepsy can have an impact on your behavior and mood. (It's important to rule out potential physical causes before seeking further treatment for a mental health problem).

Although lifestyle factors including work, diet, drugs and lack of sleep can all affect your mental health, if you experience a mental health problem there are usually other factors as well.

4, what else might I experience?

This section explains a brief overview of some difficult feelings and behaviors everyone can experience periods of feeling stress, worried, anxious, sad, afraid or angry but these all are normal emotions, however when these emotion become sever enough to the person ability to

function daily and when it becomes persistence every time then often associated with mental health problems.



Activity #2: Good and Bad Mandalas

Discussion: The world has happy and sad aspects, but sometimes negative events can lead to positive events. Consider the possibility that the negative and positive events are in some kind of harmony and that there is a larger order of goodness.

Help clients to draw, color, or paint a mandala that includes both happy and sad things in their life and intertwined with each other, in a balanced and colorful harmony; i.e. gravestones next to blossoming trees, broken hearts next to rainbows, thief next to a policeman, etc. then help participants to understand that all negative feelings doesn't indicate mental illness rather it's the different color of life.

Panic attacks

Panic attacks are a type of fear response. They're an exaggeration of your body's normal response to danger, stress or excitement. During a panic attack physical symptoms can build up very quickly, including:

- A pounding heartbeat or chest pains
- Sweating and nausea (feeling sick)
- Feeling faint and unable to breathe
- Shaky limbs, or feeling like your legs are turning to jelly
- Feeling as if you aren't connected to your body.

It's easy to mistake these for the signs of a heart attack or another serious medical problem. You might feel very afraid that you're losing control that you're going to faint or even going to die.

Self-harm

Self-harm is when you hurt yourself as a way of dealing with very difficult feelings, painful memories or overwhelming situations and experiences. You may not know why you self-harm, but it can be a means of expressing feelings that you can't put into words or think clearly about.

After self-harming you may feel a short-term sense of release, but the cause of your distress is unlikely to have gone away. Self-harm can also bring up very difficult emotions and could make you feel worse.

Psychosis

Psychosis (also called a psychotic experience or psychotic episode) is when you perceive or interpret reality in a very different way from people around you. The most common types of psychosis are: hallucinations, such as hearing voices or having visions delusions, such as paranoia or delusions of grandeur.

Psychosis affects people in different ways. You might experience it once, have short episodes throughout your life, or live with it most of the time. It's also possible to have a psychotic experience without ever being diagnosed with a particular mental health problem.

Suicidal feelings

Many people experience suicidal thoughts and feelings at some point in their lifetime. They can be very unpleasant, intrusive and frightening, but having thoughts about suicide doesn't necessarily mean that you intend to act on them. Most people don't go on to attempt to take their own lives.

Use how to spot the signs of mental illness video

All individual experiencing adverse conditions do not develop mental illness because of:

Resilience

- Resilience is the individual's capacity for adapting successfully & functioning competently despite experiencing chronic adversity or following exposure to prolonged or severe trauma.

- Resilience is the term often used to define unexpectedly good outcomes, or competence, despite the presence of adversity or risk.

Protective factors

- Protective factors are the individual, family, & social characteristics that are associated with positive adaptation.

5, what treatments are available?



The two most common forms of treatment offered though: talk therapy and medication

Talk therapy provide a regular time and space for you to talk about your thoughts and experiences and explore difficult feelings with a trained professional. This could help you to deal with a specific problem, cope with upsetting memories experiences improve your relationships, and develop more helpful ways of living day-to-day.



Medication

The most common type of treatment available is psychiatric medication. These drugs don't cure mental health problems, but they can ease many symptoms. Which type of drug you are offered will depend on your diagnosis. For example: antidepressant, antipsychotics, sleeping pill, and mood stabilizer.

6, what Coping strategies are available?

Activity #3: My Perfect Healing Hospital

Discussion: What are some treatments for physical illnesses, such as a wound, a cold, or a disease? (i.e. rest, bandages, surgery, etc.) How are these symbolic of the same treatments we use for emotional or mental problems? (i.e. talking to friends and family, talking to a therapist, hiding or protecting our hurt places, changing destructive patterns, etc.) Design your perfect healing hospital or retreat center that would help you to heal your heart and mind whenever you are having problems. Eg: recreation, support, mediation, and anything you think would be helpful.

How everyone can help him/herself?

Self-care techniques and general lifestyle changes can help manage the symptoms of many mental health problems. They may also help prevent some problems from developing or getting worse. Here are some tips for looking after yourself that you might find helpful:

Stay aware of your mental health

Spot your early warning signs: If you can, try to be aware of how you're feeling, and watch out for any signs you might be becoming unwell. These will be individual to you, but it can be useful to reflect on what these may be so you can get support as soon as possible.

Keep a mood diary. Tracking your moods can help you to work out what makes you feel better or worse. You can then take steps to avoid, change or prepare for difficult situations. You can create your own mood diary or find one online – there are many freely available on the internet and as apps for your phone.

Build your self-esteem. Taking steps to increase your self-esteem can help you to feel more confident and able to cope

Nourish your social life

Feeling connected to other people is important. It can help you to feel valued and confident about yourself, and can give you a different perspective on things. If you can, try to spend some time connecting with friends and family – even a text or phone call can make a difference.

If you don't have supportive friends and family around you and are feeling isolated, there are other ways you can make connections. For example, you could try going to community events where you might have some interests or experiences in common with other people there, or joining a group like a local book club or sports team.

Building support group

When you experience a mental health problem it can feel like no one understands. Peer support brings together people who've had similar experiences to support each other. This can offer many benefits, such as: feeling accepted for who you are increased self-confidence, meeting new people and using your experiences to help others, finding out new information and places for support challenging stigma and discrimination.

Make time for therapeutic activities

There are various techniques and therapies you can safely practice on your own:

Relaxation: you may already know what helps you relax, like having a bath, listening to music or slow walk. If you know that a certain activity helps you feel more relaxed, make sure you set aside time to do it.

Mindfulness: mindfulness is a therapeutic technique that involves being more aware of the present moment. This can mean both outside, in the world around you, and inside, in your feelings and thoughts. Practicing mindfulness can help you become more aware of your own moods and reactions, but not everyone finds mindfulness helpful.

Getting into nature: getting out into a green environment, such as a park or the countryside, is especially good for you. Even if you don't have a garden or aren't very mobile, caring for plants or animals indoors can still help you get some benefits from nature.

Keep physically active

Regular exercise doesn't have to be very strenuous or sporty to be effective – to start with you could try gentle exercise like going for a short walk, yoga or swimming. The important thing is to pick something you enjoy doing, so you're more likely to stick with it.

Avoid drugs and alcohol

While you might want to use drugs or alcohol to cope with difficult feelings, in the long run they can make you feel a lot worse..

Make time for personal care

When you're experiencing a mental health problem, it's easy for personal care to not feel like a priority. But small everyday things, such as taking a shower and getting fully dressed, can make a big difference to how you feel.

Eat healthily

What you eat, and when you eat, can make a big difference to how well you feel.

If these work well for you then you may don't need any formal treatment However, it's important to remember that there is unlikely to be an instant solution. Recovering from mental health problem is likely to take time, energy and work.

7, How can I deal with stigma?

Unfortunately, not everyone understands mental health problems. Some people may have misconceptions about what certain diagnoses mean. They may also use language you find dismissive, offensive or hurtful. This can be very upsetting – especially if someone who feels this way is a family member, classmate or a healthcare professional.

But it's important to remember that you aren't alone, and you don't have to put up with people treating you badly. Here are some options for you to think about:

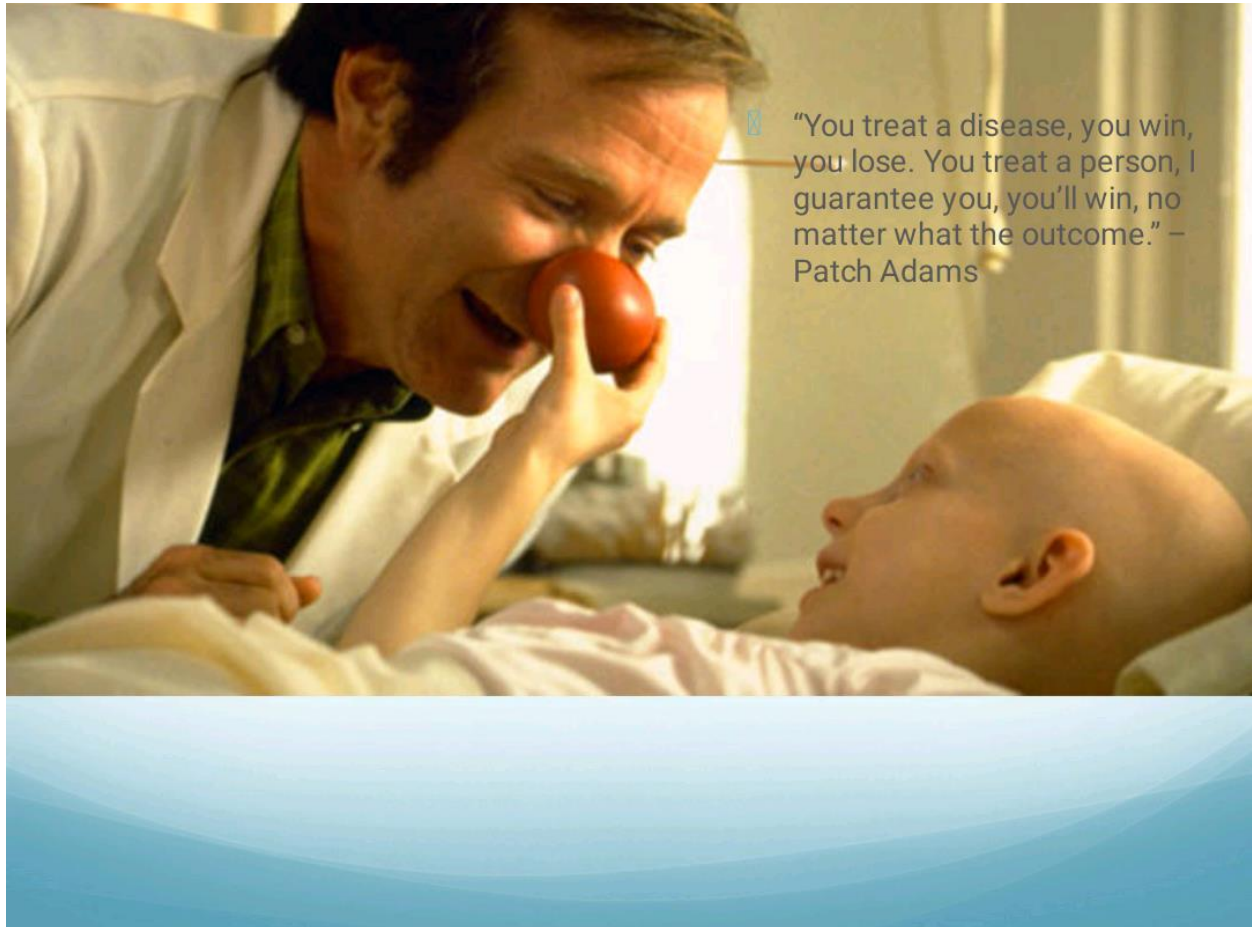
- **Show people reliable information:** to help them understand more about what your diagnosis really means.
- **Get more involved in your treatment:** for guidance on having your say in your treatment, making your voice heard, and steps you can take if you're not happy with your care.
- **Contact an advocate:** An advocate is someone who can support your choices and help you make your voice heard.
- **Know your rights:**
- **Talk about your experience:** Sharing your story can help improve people's understanding and change their.
- **Get involved in a campaign:** Organize national campaigns to end stigma and discrimination towards mental health problems.

Activity #4: Breathing exercise

Are people with mental health problems dangerous?

Some people think there is an automatic link between mental health problems and being a danger to others. This is an idea that is reinforced by sensationalized stories in the media. However, the most common mental health problems have no significant link to violent behavior. The proportion of people living with a mental health problem who commit a violent crime is extremely small. There are lots of reasons someone might commit a violent crime, and factors such as drug and alcohol misuse are far more likely to be the cause of violent behavior. But many people are still worried about talking about how they're feeling, or seeking help, because

of the fear and stigma of being seen as dangerous. It's important to remember that experiencing difficult thoughts, feelings, and behaviors when you're unwell is common, and it's **extremely unlikely** to mean you may harm another person.



Activity #5: REFLECTION

Who can tell us one thing you learned today about mental health challenges that you did not know before this session began?