Mental Health Awareness
Understanding Mental Health Challenges

• A medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning

• Affect every aspect of life

• Can affect persons of any age, race, religion or income

• Not the result of personal weakness, lack of character, or poor upbringing
Understanding Mental Health Challenges

• One in four adults in America experiences a mental health disorder in a given year
  ○ One in 17 lives with a serious mental health challenge such as schizophrenia, depression or bipolar disorder

• Half of the adults in America will develop a mental health challenge sometime in their lives

• One in 10 children lives with a serious mental or emotional disorder
Understanding Mental Health Challenges

• Symptoms of mental health challenges can appear as physical problems, such as abdominal pain, back pain or headache

• A thorough medical workup is important to understanding the cause and diagnosis of mental health challenges
Serious Mental Health Challenges

• Major depression
  ○ Mood state that goes well beyond temporarily feeling sad or blue

• Schizophrenia/schizo-affective disorder
  ○ Affects 2.4 million American adults

• Bipolar disorder
  ○ Chronic illness with recurring episodes of mania and depression
Serious Mental Health Challenges

• Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
  o Obsessions are intrusive, irrational thoughts, unwanted ideas or impulses

• Anxiety/panic disorder

• Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
  o Affects many different people, from survivors of rape and natural disasters to men and women with military service
Serious Mental Health Challenges

• Borderline personality disorder
  o Pervasive instability in moods, interpersonal relationships, self-image and behavior

• Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
  o Characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity

• Dissociative identity disorder
Risk Factors

• Close blood relative with a mental health challenge
• Mother’s exposure to viruses, toxins, drugs or alcohol during pregnancy
• Stressful life situations, such as financial problems, a loved one's death or a divorce
• Chronic medical condition, such as cancer
• Brain damage as a result of a serious injury
Risk Factors

- Traumatic experiences, such as military combat or being assaulted
- Use of illegal drugs
- Being abused or neglected as a child
- Lack of friends or healthy relationships
- Having a previous mental health challenge
Signs and Symptoms

• Feeling sad or down
• Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
• Excessive fears or worries
• Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
• Withdrawal from friends and activities
• Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping
• Delusions, paranoia or hallucinations
Signs and Symptoms

- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- Extreme feelings of guilt
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Major changes in eating habits
- Sex drive changes
- Excessive anger, hostility or violence
- Suicidal thinking
Complications of MH Challenges

- Unhappiness and decreased enjoyment of life
- Family conflicts
- Relationship difficulties
- Social isolation
- Problems with tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
- Problems at work or school
Complications of MH Challenges

• Poverty and homelessness
• Self-harm and harm to others, including suicide or homicide
• Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
• Weakened immune system
• Heart disease and other medical conditions
Recovery from MH Challenges

• As people become familiar with their illness they recognize their own patterns of behavior

• A holistic process that involves a variety of perspectives

• Recovery journey is unique for each individual

• A process, not an event

• Requires community support and continuity of care
Recovery from MH Challenges

• Seek effective and timely care
  o Because mental health challenges have no cure, treatment may need to be continuous

• Treatment extends beyond medication
  o Includes attaining and maintaining physical health

• Individuals with a mental health challenges benefit tremendously from taking responsibility for their own recovery
Treatment of MH Challenges

• Medications available to help with challenges including psychosis, depression and anxiety
  o Usually effective but side effects should be monitored and minimized

• Treatment program should also include other essential components such as:
  o Psychotherapy
  o Support groups
  o Patient understanding of the challenge
What Can You Do?

• If you have any signs or symptoms of a mental health challenge, see your doctor, mental health provider or other health professional

• If your loved one shows signs of a mental health challenge, have an open and honest discussion with him or her about your concerns
The Treatment Team

- Family or primary care doctor
- Psychiatrist
- Psychotherapist, such as a psychologist or a licensed counselor
- Pharmacist
- Social worker
- Family members/peers
Questions for the Treatment Team

- What mental health challenge might I have?
- Why can't I get over it on my own?
- How do you treat my mental health challenge?
- Will counseling or psychotherapy help?
- Are there medications that might help?
- How long will treatment take?
Questions for the Treatment Team

• What can I do to help myself?
• Do you have any brochures or other printed material that I can have?
• What websites do you recommend?
Dealing With Suicidal Thoughts

• Call 911 or your local emergency number

• Call a suicide hotline number, such as (800) 273-TALK, to reach a trained counselor

• Reach out to a close friend or loved one or a minister or someone in your faith community

• Contact your doctor, other health care provider or mental health specialist
Living Well With MH Challenges

• Stick to your treatment plan
• Avoid alcohol and drug use
• Stay active
• Don't make important decisions when your symptoms are severe
• Prioritize your life
• Learn to adopt a positive attitude