

## FACTS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

- Severe mental illnesses are biologically-based brain diseases that profoundly disrupt a person's ability to think, feel & relate. They result in substantially diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.
- Persons of any age can be affected by mental illness.
- Mental illness is NOT THE SAME as mental retardation. Individuals with mental retardation have a diminished intellectual capacity usually present at birth. Those with mental illness are usually of normal intelligence, although they may have difficulty performing at a normal level due to their illness.
- During any one-year period, up to 50 million Americans – more than 22 percent – suffer from a clearly diagnosable mental disorder involving a degree of incapacity that interferes with employment, attendance at school or daily life.
- Persons with mental illness occupy more hospital beds nationwide than persons with any other illness – 25.8% of all hospital admissions in U.S. in 1998 were psychiatric admissions.
- The treatment success rate for a first episode of schizophrenia is 60%, 65-70% for major depression, and 80% for bipolar disorder – whereas the treatment success rate for heart disease ranges from 41-52%.
- The total cost of mental health services in the U.S. was \$148 billion in 1990. The direct cost of mental health services (treatment and rehabilitation costs) totaled \$69 billion, and the indirect costs (lost productivity at work, school, or home due to disability or death) were estimated at \$78.6 billion.
- Four of the ten leading causes of disability in the United States and other developed countries are mental disorders, which include major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.
- Approximately one-third of the estimated 600,000 homeless people in the United States have a severe mental illness. However, only one in 20 persons with a severe mental illness is homeless.
- Only 5-7% of homeless persons with a mental illness need to be institutionalized; most can live in the community with appropriate, supportive housing.
- Mental illness can affect anyone at any time, and need not limit one's achievements and aspirations. Among the famous people with mental illnesses: Beethoven; Churchill; Abraham Lincoln; Michelangelo; Mike Wallace; Jessica Lange; Tipper Gore; Elton John; Art Buchwald.