

# Mental Health in America.

The Rise of Depression diagnosis.

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Mental Health awareness in America is rising, which could present a change in how we view mental health and how we treat it. More and more people are searching for the help that they need which is increasing the amount of treatment for it, as well as awareness.

According to the CDC, depression is:

“When a sad mood lasts for a long time and interferes with normal, everyday functioning, you may be depressed. Symptoms of depression include:<sup>1</sup>

- Feeling sad or anxious often or all the time
- Not wanting to do activities that used to be fun
- Feeling irritable, easily frustrated, or restless
- Having trouble falling asleep or staying asleep
- Waking up too early or sleeping too much”

(CDC).

“Everyone feels sad sometimes. But if you feel sad for more than 2 weeks – or lose interest or pleasure in things – it may be depression.” (NYC.GOV)

# Rise in diagnosis.

- “From the last report, depression diagnosis has increased 33% from 2013-2016” (BCBS).  
“Affecting 9 million people, which is a diagnosis rate of 4.4% in America” (BCBS).
- “Depression “may be caused by a combination of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors,” the CDC says” (NBCNEWS).
- “It increased 63 percent in adolescents (ages 12 to 17) and 47 percent in millennials (ages 18 to 34)” (USNEWS).
- Depression on rise with youth “the prevalence of teens who reported an MDE in the previous 12 months jumped from 8.7% in 2005 to 11.5% in 2014. That’s a 37 percent increase.” (TIME)
- “Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older, or 18.1% of the population every year.” (ADAA)
- “It's not uncommon for someone with an anxiety disorder to also suffer from depression or vice versa. Nearly one-half of those diagnosed with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder.” (ADAA)

# Interest.

Something I found interesting is that more and more people are reaching out for help regarding mental illness, driving more awareness and less stigma associated with it. People reporting more cases means we can treat them effectively and efficiently, helping speed up the process in which we treat mental illness. Another thing I found interesting is that amongst youth, there is less of a taboo, as more people are coming out and getting help rather than keeping it bottled up like our predecessors did.

# Why?

The reason as to why I picked this topic, was because this topic hits very close to home, I've been dealing with depression since I was 14, and have been diagnosed with Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) for about 4 years now. The symptoms come and go, but you don't see enough people reaching out, it's very hard to reach out, and I've always been open about it, I self-diagnosed at a young age and I began talking to people about it ever since. Talking to my peers about it doesn't affect me negatively, it helps to know that you're not alone, even when you feel like you are. I have never hidden my disorder from people, but I don't mention it unless it comes up in conversation, due to the stigma around it.

# Future plans:

In the future, I will get more research done, and get more hands on with the topic, visit therapists and see what the turnout rate is, if that information is available.

I will also look into a bigger time period and a bigger demographic to see how Mental Health is treated and diagnosed around the world.

# Interviews

- I interviewed my parents on the case, my mom has always, and currently was a bit withdrawn on the subject, as she's always been on the fence about it. She never really paid attention to mental illnesses unless it was something major such as ADD or ADHD, she always thought depression was just in the person's head, and has even asked me to stop taking my medication because of the side effects rather than the long term help.
- My father was a different case, as depression runs on his side of the family, his mother and sister both have it, and it brought relief to me knowing it was in the family and I wasn't the only one suffering from it.
- Lastly, I interviewed my friend of 14 years, and he was totally different from my parents, he listened, cared and even gave suggestions as what to do, with him, defeat or surrendering wasn't a word in his vocabulary when it came to mental health awareness. He was very adamant about getting the help people need despite what's said about it.

# Interviews

- My father and friend had a much more similar approach, but very different at the same time. Although my father was accepting of it, he was still very withdrawn from the subject, just as my mother. Both my parents wanted me to stop taking medication, but my friend was more on the medication side, as it could help.
- All 3 answers were different, but the also very similar.



# New Findings

Things I found different from the first time, that I found on the second time was the numbers. There's a higher turn out for people who want help, and people who are getting diagnosed. I learned that more and more youth are coming out and asking for the help they need, earlier on rather than waiting till its too late or never getting help.

# Wrap-up

Mental health awareness has increased in America, and more people are approaching health care professionals for help. The more people look for help, the smaller the stigma for mental help there is. Youth and millennials are asking for more help rather than having it go unnoticed.

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