

A MENTAL HEALTH FACT (HORROR) SHEET

1. In a recent study, respondents were asked to rate which disability groups were most/least acceptable to them. Those disability groups most acceptable were individuals with obvious physical handicaps; next came those who were blind or deaf. The least acceptable people were ex-convicts, the retarded, and alcoholics. Can you guess who was in last place? The mentally ill.
2. There are more people with serious mental illnesses in jails and prisons in America than there are in state mental institutions. There are two times as many individuals with serious mental illnesses in shelters and on the street as there are in state mental hospitals. Thousands more are warehoused in squalid adult homes, and nursing homes. Yet as a national average, states still pay more than 2/3 of their annual Mental Health budgets to maintain state mental hospitals.
3. A recent study showed that of all health insurance policies in America, only 37% have inpatient coverage for mental illness, and that only 6% have comparable outpatient coverage. In the case of Blue Shield/Blue Cross, a medical patient pays \$ 3,200 out-of-pocket on a \$ 100,000 hospital bill, while a patient with mental illness pays \$ 89,000, out-of-pocket on the same amount. The Mental Health Law Project estimates that only 1/3 of the 30 million Americans who require special services for mental disorders actually receive care.
4. People with mental illness utilize more hospital beds than heart disease, cancer, and lung ailments combined. Yet funds spent for research per patient come to \$ 203 for cancer, \$ 88 for heart disease, and \$ 7.35 for schizophrenia. The Jerry Lewis Telethon raises millions for Muscular Dystrophy research, helped by huge corporations like McDonald's and Sara Lee. For every person with muscular dystrophy, there are 40 with schizophrenia. Only 1% of the corporate and private foundations in America have ever funded research in the mental illnesses.
5. In a recent national survey by NAMI asking about the causes of mental illness, 71% of the respondents believed severe mental illnesses was due to emotional weakness, 65% thought bad parenting was to blame, 45% thought the mentally ill bring on their illness and could "will it away", 35% cited "sinful behavior", and 43% thought that mental illness was incurable. Only 10% believed that serious mental disorders had a biological basis and involved the brain.