

# DEBUNKING THE MYTHS



Stigma occurs whenever there are negative opinions, judgments or stereotypes about anyone with any form of mental illness. Stigma exists mainly because some people don't understand mental illness, and also because some people have negative attitudes or beliefs towards it.

## HERE ARE A FEW TRUTHS TO DEBUNK COMMON MYTHS AROUND MENTAL HEALTH -

- **Mental health conditions are uncommon**  
**FALSE** - 1 in 5 (20%) Australians experience a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with, or limits one or more major life activities. It can affect anyone, no matter the ages, races, income levels or religions.
- **People are “faking it” or doing it for attention.**  
**FALSE** - No one would choose to have a mental illness, just as no one would choose to have a physical illness. The causes for mental health conditions are intensively studied and they are real. For anyone living with a mental health condition, their specific symptoms may not always be visible to an untrained observer.
- **Mental illness is caused by personal weakness.**  
**FALSE** - Just like any major illness, mental illness is not the fault of the person who has a mental health condition. It is caused by environmental and biological factors, not a result of personal weakness. A stressful job or home life can make some people more susceptible, as do traumatic life events.
- **You're not depressed, you're just sad.**  
**FALSE** - While its normal to feel sad on occasions, depression is not just 'the blues'. It is a serious medical condition that affects the biological function of our body.
- **People with mental illness can't handle work or school.**  
**FALSE** - Stressful situations can be difficult for all people, not just those who live with mental illness. People with mental health conditions have jobs, go to school, and are active members of their communities.



“ **45% of  
Australians  
experiences it  
in their  
lifetime.** ”