

# PREVALENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS

01

Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.—43.8 million, or 18.5%—experiences mental illness in a given year.

02

Approximately 1 in 25 adults in the U.S.—9.8 million, or 4.0%—experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.

03

Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13-18 (21.4%) experiences a severe mental disorder at some point during their life. For children aged 8-15, the estimate is 13%.

04

18.1% of adults in the U.S. experienced an anxiety disorder such as posttraumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and specific phobias.

05

Among the 20.2 million adults in the U.S. who experienced a substance use disorder, 50.5%—10.2 million adults—had a co-occurring mental illness.

(Source: NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness)

*Operation Survival was founded in 1988 in the hopes of stemming the inevitable tide of drugs and alcohol seeping into the community.*

*Operation Survival provides evidence-based programming in the local yeshivas and public schools, art programs, rap groups, positive alternatives, and crisis assistance to thousands of students each year.*

*The program also networks with other agencies to disseminate information to educators, clergy, social service and medical professionals, and community agencies.*

*Operation Survival is the first program to combat alcoholism and substance abuse in both the Jewish and African-American communities of Crown Heights, and has been credited with bringing the racially diverse community together in common cause.*

*David Schwartz, Psy.D., LCSW has been a professional counselor for 40 years. David focuses on evaluation, prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional and behavioral health issues.*



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**PREVENTION** 101  
Help Save a Life.



**Living with  
Mental Illness**

A project of Operation Survival

**P**eople living with mental illness are often ashamed or even afraid to tell others what they are going through. They are worried about the judgments people will make about them if they knew that they are taking medication or seeing a therapist.



In the 1980s, the Lubavitcher Rebbe wrote a letter to someone who was experiencing a psychological problem, and he said medication may be needed. In those days there were only a handful of drugs on the market.



**Today there are many new medications available. While medication is not the only option available, it is appropriate in certain cases. People who need medication should not be hesitant to make use of that help.**

Dr. David Schwartz worked with a young bipolar man who was taking medication. He was dating, and the relationship was getting serious. The young man spoke with his rav, who said he had to tell the young woman that he was taking medication. On their next date, he told her. She opened up her purse and said, "So am I."

The young man was shocked. He had been scared she would reject him but instead learned that she was just like him and they were both just people getting the help they need.

**The most important step in treating a mental health condition is finding a mental health professional.**

A trustworthy and knowledgeable mental health professional will be a valuable ally. It may take a little time and persistence to find someone whom you feel comfortable working with.



► Based on an interview with David Schwartz, Psy.D., LCSW for Prevention 101 series.



**It is important for people to remember that there is no shame in getting help with mental illness, like depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorder, and there are many different types of help in today's world.**



**WE** live in a world where people help each other get through challenges. That help can be through medications, therapy, exercise, hobbies such as music and art, or a combination of these methods. A person dealing with a mental illness may feel as if the situation is hopeless. This is simply not true. Help is available, and there is no shame in getting that help.