

## Mental Health Myths & Facts Quiz with Answers and Sources

### 1. On average, mental health consumers are:

- a. much more likely to be violent than the general population
- b. about as likely to slightly more likely to be violent as the general population
- c. less likely to be violent than the general population

The answer is B, slightly more likely.

Many studies show that people with mental health conditions are no more violent than the general population. Some studies find a slightly higher rate of violence than the general population, but such violence tends to be concentrated within a small fraction of individuals with mental illness, generally those abusing substances. Moreover, violent acts committed by persons with mental illnesses represent a small fraction of the violence perpetrated in our country, yet these acts are frequently highly sensationalized by the media and lead to the continued stigmatization of persons with mental illnesses. (From Mental Health America Position Statement 21)

See also: H Stuart. A Public Health Perspective on Violent Offenses Among Persons With Mental Illness. *Psychiatric Services*. May 2001 52:654-659.

### 2. On average, compared to the general population, mental health consumers are:

- a. more likely to be the victim of violent crime
- b. about as likely to be the victim of violent crime
- c. less likely to be the victim of violent crime

The answer is A, more likely to be the victim of violent crime.

More than one-quarter of people with severe mental illness say they were victims of a violent crime within the past year, giving them a more than 11-fold higher risk than that seen in the general population, according to new study findings.

She added that many people are likely to be surprised by the findings, given the stereotype that people with mental illness are dangerous, rather than at risk of being victims themselves.

As an illustration of this bias, Teplin and her colleagues found 13 times more research about people with mental illness as perpetrators violent acts than as victims of violent acts. "We don't think about their vulnerability to victimization," she said in an interview.

[People with mental illness often victims of crime by Alison McCook Reuters Health August 1, 2005, NEW YORK (Reuters Health)]See also: Archives of General Psychiatry, August 2005

**3. On average, compared to the general population, consumers with a serious mental illness will:**

- a. live about 5 years less
- b. live about 10 years less
- c. live about 25 years less

The answer is C, consumers with a serious mental illness will live about 25 years less.

It has been known for several years that persons with serious mental illness die younger than the general population. However, recent evidence reveals that the rate of...illness and...death in this population has accelerated. In fact, persons with serious mental illness (SMI) are now dying 25 years earlier than the general population...largely due to treatable medical conditions that are caused by...smoking, obesity, substance abuse, and inadequate access to medical care. (From the Report forward, Joe Parks, MD)  
See also: Morbidity and Mortality in People with Serious Mental Illness. NASMHPD.

**4. For any adult living in the United States, the chance of suffering from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year is:**

- a. about 1 in 100 (1%)
- b. about 1 in 20 (5%)
- c. about 1 in 4 (25%)
- d. about 1 in 2 (50%)

The answer is C, about 1 in 4 (25%)

Mental disorders are common in the United States and internationally. An estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older – about one in four adults – suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year.

(From NMH, “The Numbers Count: Mental Disorders in America”) See also: Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of twelve-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 2005 Jun;62(6):617-27.

**5. True or False: Mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and Canada for ages 15-44.**

The answer is True. (From NIMH, “The Numbers Count: Mental Disorders in America”) See also: The World Health Organization. The World Health Report 2004: Changing History, Annex Table 3: Burden of disease in DALYs by cause, sex, and mortality stratum in WHO regions, estimates for 2002. Geneva: WHO, 2004.