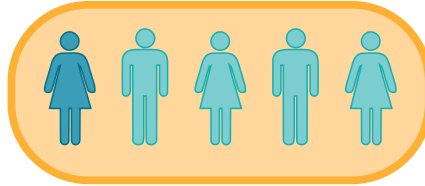


# B4Stage4

## Changing the Way We Think About Mental Health

When we think about cancer, heart disease, or diabetes, we don't wait years to treat them. We start before Stage 4—we begin with prevention. When people are in the first stage of those diseases and are beginning to show signs or symptoms like a persistent cough, high blood pressure, or high blood sugar, we try immediately to reverse these symptoms. We don't ignore them. In fact, we develop a plan of action to reverse and sometimes stop the progression of the disease. So why don't we do the same for individuals who are dealing with potentially serious mental illness?

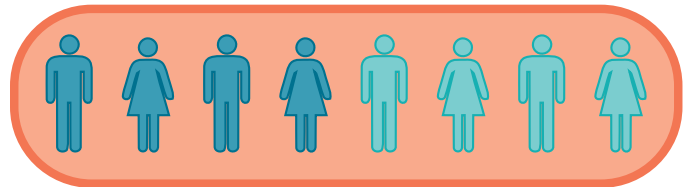


# 1 in 5

American adults will have a diagnosable mental health condition in any given year.<sup>1</sup>

# 50

PERCENT



of Americans will meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition sometime in their life, and half of those people will develop conditions by the age of 14.<sup>2</sup>

## Stages of Mental Health Conditions

**Stage 1:**  
Mild Symptoms  
and Warning  
Signs

At Stage 1, a person begins to show symptoms of a mental health condition, but is still able to maintain the ability to function at home, work or school—although perhaps not as easily as before they started to show symptoms. Often there is a sense that something is “not right.”

**Stage 2:**  
Symptoms Increase  
in Frequency and  
Severity and Interfere  
with Life Activities and  
Roles

At Stage 2, it usually becomes obvious that something is wrong. A person's symptoms may become stronger and last longer or new symptoms may start appearing on top of existing ones, creating something of a snowball effect. Performance at work or school will become more difficult, and a person may have trouble keeping up with family duties, social obligations or personal responsibilities.

**Stage 3:**  
Symptoms Worsen with  
Relapsing and Recurring  
Episodes Accompanied  
by Serious Disruption in  
Life Activities and Roles

At Stage 3, symptoms have continued to increase in severity, and many symptoms are often taking place at the same time. A person may feel as though they are losing control of their life and the ability to fill their roles at home, work or school.

**Stage 4:**  
Symptoms are  
Persistent and Severe  
and Have Jeopardized  
One's Life

By Stage 4, the combination of extreme, prolonged and persistent symptoms and impairment often results in development of other health conditions and has the potential to turn into a crisis event like unemployment, hospitalization, homelessness or even incarceration. In the worst cases, untreated mental illnesses can lead to loss of life an average of 25 years early.