

**The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's**

# **Resource Center to Promote Acceptance, Dignity, and Social Inclusion Associated with Mental Health**

**SAMHSA's ADS Center**

For more information call or visit:  
1-800-540-0320

[www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov](http://www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration  
Center for Mental Health Services

## **The Need:**

Prejudice and discrimination are major barriers to recovery for people who have mental health problems. They are among the reasons why nearly two-thirds of all people with diagnosable mental illness do not seek treatment. Prejudice and discrimination can:

- Reduce access to resources and opportunities.
- Contribute to feelings of low self-esteem, isolation, and hopelessness.
- Impact access to housing, employment, and community participation.

## **What is Recovery:**

Mental health recovery is a journey of healing and transformation enabling a person with a mental health problem to live a meaningful life in a community of his or her choice while striving to achieve his or her full potential.

*“There's a collective hunger to have mental illnesses brought out of the proverbial closet, to exchange information and share stories. There is also a fear of it... People, just like me, craved to be heard, hungered to see themselves reflected accurately among their peers and their communities.”*

- Victoria Maxwell

## **Our Goal:**

The goal of the SAMHSA ADS Center is to enhance social acceptance and inclusion by ensuring that people with mental health problems can live full, productive lives within communities without fear of prejudice and discrimination.

*“I worked as a chef for about 15 years. But there was a lot of stigma around mental illness in the restaurant business. Every restaurant I worked at, I saw other people disclose [their illness] and they wound up being badly harassed and losing their jobs. So I hid my illness.”*

- Sam Harris

## **People who have mental illnesses can and do recover and live productive lives.**

Recovery can mean being able to hold down a job, go back to school, have a close relationship with family and friends, or however an individual defines it. It is a feeling of responsibility for one's life and a sense of control over one's problems.

*“My best friend could see the trouble I was in. She bought me a book on co-dependency. We talked about depression and anxiety, and she eventually steered me toward her family psychiatrist. I believe she saved my life.”*

- Lynn

***People who have mental illnesses have the same needs as everyone else.***

Meaningful work; decent, affordable housing; good health care; sufficient education; positive relationships; and acceptance by family and friends matter to each of us.

***People who have mental illnesses make valuable contributions to society.***

Evidence points to the likelihood that author Ernest Hemmingway, composer Ludwig van Beethoven, and scientist Sir Isaac Newton all had a mental illness. Overcoming prejudice and discrimination, getting effective services, and being part of a support network can help people with mental illnesses to enjoy meaningful careers.

***Discrimination against people who have mental illnesses keeps them from seeking help.***

Mental health is as important as physical health to the overall well-being of individuals and societies. Yet only a small minority of those living with psychiatric disabilities receive treatment. Fear of disclosure, rejection by friends, and discrimination are a few reasons why people with mental illnesses don't seek help.

*"I believe that the loneliness of living with a mental illness is the most difficult part of it... Stigma within my own family prevents me from engaging with them. I feel very sad about this."*

*- Victoria Molta*

***Discrimination against people who have mental illnesses violates their rights and denies them opportunities.***

Despite the Americans with Disabilities Act and other civil rights laws, people with psychiatric disabilities often experience discrimination in the workplace, education, housing, and health care.

## The SAMHSA ADS Center Can Help You By Providing:

- Information about what works to promote acceptance and social inclusion of people with mental illnesses.
- Training and technical assistance to help create initiatives to promote social inclusion.
- Information about how to connect with campaigns and programs that already are in place.
- Information about publications, events, research, resources, and issues of relevance regarding prejudice and discrimination.
- A comprehensive bibliography of literature addressing prejudice and discrimination.
- Resources and information promoting social inclusion related to special populations.

## Campaign for Mental Health Recovery

SAMHSA's Campaign for Mental Health Recovery (CMHR) at <http://www.whatadifference.org> is a national public education effort aimed at improving the general public's understanding of mental health problems. With grassroots support from States and community organizations, the CMHR accomplishes its goals through TV and radio public service announcements, a Web site, and print and transit advertising. The SAMHSA ADS Center supports the CMHR through the following ways:

- Provides information to State coordinators, local representatives, and CMHR State and local subcontractors about the national campaign activities and technical assistance, training materials, and resources.
- Provides training and technical assistance to CMHR partners.
- Connects individuals with people in their State who are working on projects to reduce prejudice and discrimination associated with mental illnesses.

### ***How To Contact Us:***

The SAMHSA ADS Center's staff is available by phone, mail, and e-mail to provide information and assistance.

### ***By Phone:***

The SAMHSA ADS Center's toll-free number is 1-800-540-0320. We are open Monday-Friday (9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern time) with bilingual (English/Spanish) staff.

**On the Web:**

<http://www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov>

**SAMHSA Mail:**

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