

# Mental Illness

**The term 'mental illness' is ridden with taboos and stereotypes.** Often one confuses this with intellectual disabilities. In fact, till very recently, urban lingo usage of 'retard' was quite common. It's meant to be funny or derogatory and used casually for people who show any signs of incomprehension.

**Portrayals of mental illness in films** and television have contributed adversely towards enforcing misconceptions in the societal mindset. Movies like Sadma, Darr, Joker, Karthik Calling Karthik or One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest are classic examples of reiterating stigma in the minds of the audience.

**Mental Illness is an invisible disability, often undiagnosed.** So, it is difficult to collect the accurate prevalence rate of the condition in a country like India.

In 2017, a World Health Organization (WHO) report estimated that 20% of Indians are likely to suffer from depression in their lifetime. The surge in mental illnesses following the **Covid pandemic** has also lent itself towards washing off the misconceptions and adding a lens of empathy.

- The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 defines Mental Illness as a substantial disorder of thinking, mood, perception, orientation or memory that grossly impairs judgment, behavior, capacity to recognize reality or ability to meet the ordinary demands of life.
- It does not include intellectual disability which is a condition of arrested or incomplete development of the mind of a person, specially characterized by subnormality of intelligence.
- People with mental illness can feel isolated, misunderstood, and stigmatized.
- They may struggle to communicate their needs and experiences to others.

Average Indian families still hide any signs of depression exhibited by any member. Until Deepika Padukone, a Bollywood Actor, openly spoke about her depression and created [the live love laugh foundation](#) to help others like her. The subject then received little media attention.

**But things are changing.**

**Treatment for mental illness** can involve a variety of approaches,

- Including medication,
- Therapy, and
- Support from loved ones and professionals.

**Recovery from mental illness is possible**, but it often requires a long-term commitment to self-care and treatment. If you or someone you know is struggling with mental illness, **know that there is help available.**

Here is a list of [10 NGOS](#) in India working for persons with mental illness.