

# 4 Ways You Can Stop Mental Health Myths & Misperceptions

## Stop using mental health disorders as adjectives.

Using mental health disorders in place of adjectives diminishes the seriousness of mental illnesses, further contributing to bias and prejudice and spreading misinformation as to what it really means to be mentally ill. **Examples:** Referring to a meticulous person as OCD or the changing weather as Bipolar.

### *What You Can Do:*

Educate yourself and others so we do not use diagnoses as **buzzwords**.



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## Stop using phrases like, “Just snap out of it!”

Not only does this delegitimize someone’s mental illness, it also places the blame on the person by making it seem like a choice. Asking someone to “stop” or “snap out of it” is like asking someone with, say, a broken arm, to stop feeling pain by thinking positively. Physical health doesn’t work that way and neither does mental health.

### *What You Can Do:*

Ask how someone is feeling and listen. Sometimes, just knowing that someone else is **listening can make all the difference** in the world.



## Stop treating psychiatric medication differently than medication prescribed for a physical illness.

Medication is often viewed as a crutch, or something only “crazy” people need. We invalidate those with mental health challenges with beliefs like this. If it were possible to just “pull ourselves out of it,” suicide wouldn’t be the 2<sup>nd</sup> most common cause of death for youth ages 15 to 24.

### *What You Can Do:*

Help others understand that medication to improve **mental health is no different** than medication needed for a physical condition.



## Stop leaving mental health out of the conversation.

We aren’t taught language to discuss mental health the way we are for physical health.

### *What You Can Do:*

If you are someone who struggles with a mental health challenge, share your experience. If not, don’t be afraid to educate yourself and ask questions. Approach the topic with sensitivity and without judgment. Also, talk with children and youth about their feelings. Make mental health part of the conversation in your home.

