

5 REASONS PEOPLE AVOID OR REFUSE MENTAL HEALTH CARE

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With increased awareness and access to mental health care services, there are many reasons why people refuse or avoid mental health support. Here are 5 reasons or barriers that maybe at the root of you or someone you know to resist seeking help.

STIGMA

“I’m not crazy!” is a common response to the suggestion of seeing a mental health professional. It is still viewed as a moral “weakness” to not “get over it” on your own in our independent oriented culture. A therapist is aware of the role stigma may play in accessing care and can explore the “Pros and Cons” of counseling. It might be determined you are not ready to talk but know the service is available whenever you are ready.

DENIAL

“Ain’t nothing wrong with me!” is a response to others pointing out concerns for someone else’s mental wellness. For example, “I don’t have a drinking problem” even though the person has had several DUIs or has blackouts after drinking. “I just had a difficult morning” response when a pattern of lateness to work is brought to their attention, it could be a symptom of a deeper mental health issue (i.e. depression).

DRUGS

“They’ll try to give me drugs” is also a cause to avoid mental health care.

They might feel that drugs will be mandated, and they will become addicted. They may fear being experimented upon with a drug or recall past situations in the news about abusive practices.

Medication may never be recommended. Holistic approaches may be explored (i.e. diet, exercise, sleep patterns). Medication options might be offered as a last resort along with education about how it works. You have the ultimate say in your treatment.

GENDER BARRIERS

Men tend to avoid anything that may cause them to feel vulnerable especially in front of other men. Therefore, many will suffer in silence and only talk to someone when “forced” to (i.e. A partner threatening to leave a relationship, legal requirement). Women may tend to talk to their girlfriends than seek therapy. However, if their friends share positive experiences in counseling it may allow them to consider it as an option.

SHAME

Some people might feel whatever they are going through, it was their “fault” therefore no one can help them. For example, if the person had a history of being sexually abused as a child/adult, the need to hide this from others becomes a priority. How others may perceive them or facing a painful reality is too emotionally threatening.

Mental health professionals are trained to assist navigating the barriers listed above. Therapy can be an uncomfortable experience, but it can also be the first step to healing new and old emotional wounds. Ultimately, it is an investment in yourself care and optimal well-being.