

# Learning About Disabilities

## Psychological/Psychiatric Disorders

Individuals with psychological or psychiatric disorders are not generally identifiable by appearance or noticeably disabled. Yet, these individuals may need accommodations in order to fully participate in a post-secondary program. According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness, one in seventeen (about 13.6 million) people live with a serious mental illness.

### COMMON MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS

- Bi-Polar Disorder
- Clinical Depression
- Schizophrenia
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Tourette's syndrome
- Eating Disorders

### POSSIBLE ACCOMMODATIONS

- Extended time on test and exams
- Reduced-distraction testing environment
- Note-takers or instructor's class notes
- Flexible Attendance
- Flexible class scheduling
- Reduced course load

### TREATMENT METHODS

There are a number of treatment options for individuals with psychological/psychiatric disabilities. Some individuals prefer to manage their symptoms through medication while others may prefer to attend regular therapy sessions. The majority of individuals, however, utilize a combination of the two. Mental health medications do not cure psychological/psychiatric disorders but can significantly reduce the severity of symptoms. Alternatively, psychosocial approaches to therapy are extremely helpful in providing support, education and guidance to the client. The preferred treatment plan depends on the type of mental illness and the severity of symptoms.

**"Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of, but stigma and bias shame us all."**

**– Bill Clinton**

### STIGMATIZATION

Many students may be reluctant to disclose or discuss their psychological/psychiatric disability for fear of stigmatization. Stigma can be obvious and direct in the form of negative remarks regarding the condition or it can appear in the form of stereotypes such as assuming all individuals with a condition are unstable or violent. In many cases, students internalize the stigma and judge themselves making it difficult to ask for assistance.

To reduce the effects of stigmatization, students are encouraged to utilize campus resources. Some easy ways to combat stigmatization are:

- **Don't isolate yourself**
- **Don't equate yourself with your psychological/psychiatric disability**
- **Don't let stigma create self-doubt and shame**
- **Reach out to campus offices and staff**
- **Speak out against stigma**

### CAMPUS RESOURCES

OFFICE	NUMBER	EMAIL
Disability Resources	216.368.5230	disability@case.edu
University Counseling Center	216.368.5872	counseling@case.edu
University Health Services	216.368.2450	healthservice@case.edu
Flora Stone Mather Center for Women	216.368.0985	centerforwomen@case.edu
Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity	216.368.8877	kimberly.yurchick@case.edu