



**SIZWE-HOSMED**  
MEDICAL SCHEME  
*Your choice for quality care*



# MENTAL HEALTH

AWARENESS

## Dear Member

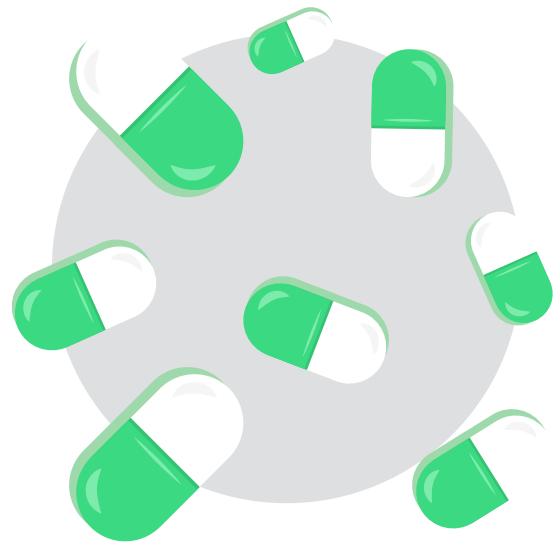
July is Mental Health Awareness Month.

According to the World Health Organisation, "Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realises his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community." Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health.

## WHAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS?

Mental illness, also called mental health disorders, includes a wide variety of mental health conditions that affect a person's thinking, behaviour and mood.

The exact cause of most mental illnesses is not known, but it is becoming clear through research that many of these conditions are caused by a combination of genetic, social and environmental factors.



## IS MENTAL ILLNESS A BIG ISSUE?

The National Alliance on Mental Illness estimates that one in five people lives with some sort of mental health disorder or disease. Even though the average age for the early signs of mental illness to manifest is 14 years, most individuals don't seek help until adulthood.

According to the South African Depression and Anxiety Group, 9% of all teen deaths are caused by suicide, particularly where signs of depression were not recognised and treated.

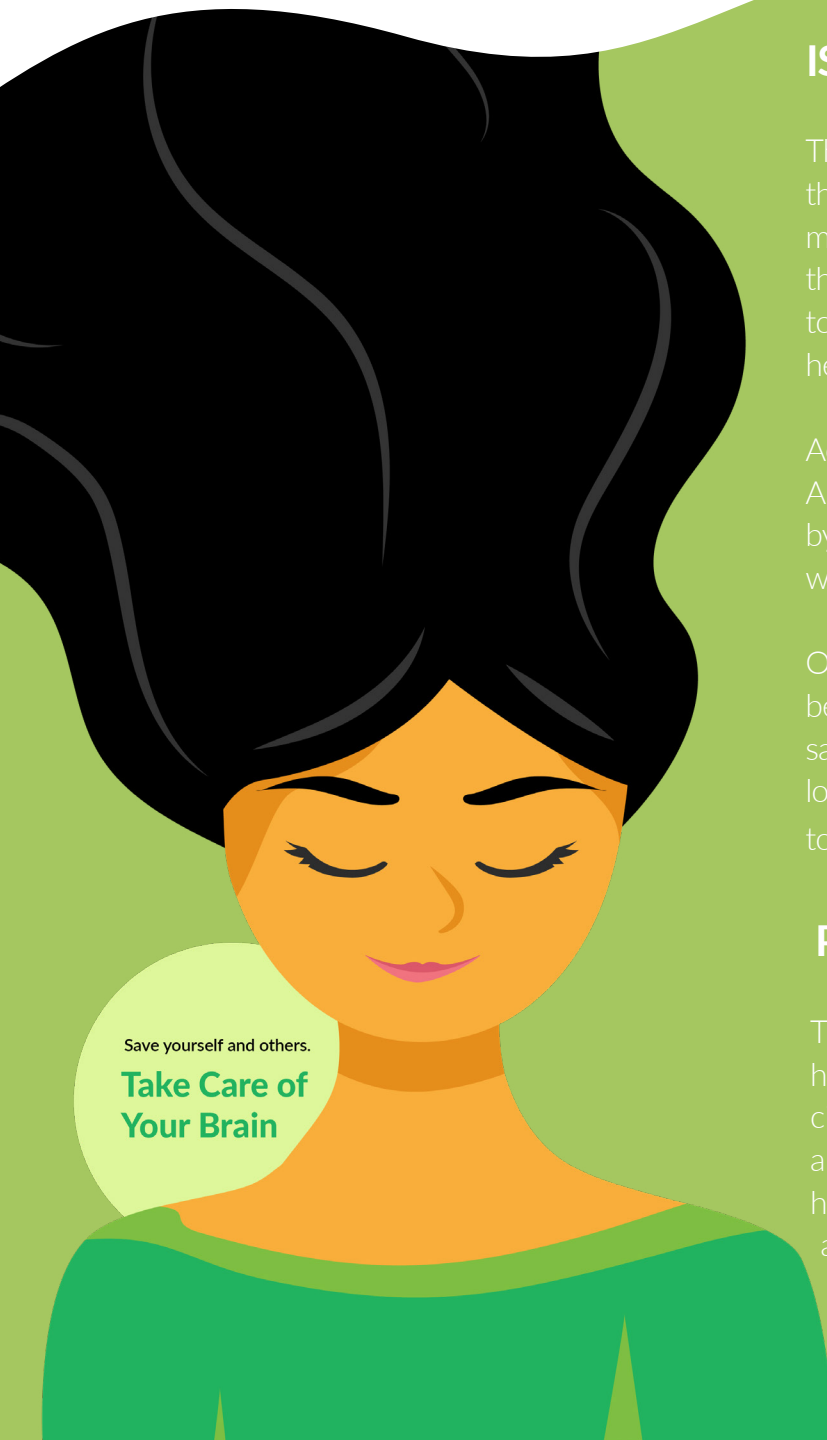
Occasionally, it can be hard to tell the difference between mental illness and normal worry or sadness, but mental illness is more severe, lasts longer, and significantly affects a person's ability to cope.

## PREVENTION

There are many factors that influence our mental health, such as our personal history and social circumstances. Although it is not possible to stop all mental ill-health from developing, many mental health problems can be prevented with the right approach.

Save yourself and others.

**Take Care of  
Your Brain**





### Primary prevention: stopping mental health problems before they start

This type of prevention is aimed at communities and focuses on promoting good mental health for all through anti-stigma campaigns such as Mental Health Awareness Week, or teaching school children about emotions and mental ill-health.



### Secondary prevention: supporting those at higher risk of experiencing mental health problems

This focuses on supporting people who are more likely to develop mental health problems, either because of characteristics they were born with or experiences they've had. It includes people with a higher chance of being bullied, people who have experienced trauma, people with a long-term physical health condition and victims of hate crimes.



### Tertiary prevention: helping people living with mental health problems to stay well

This approach focuses on helping people with mental ill-health to stay well, and to have a good quality of life. It aims to reduce people's symptoms, empower them to manage their own wellbeing and reduce the risk of relapse.

## YOUR WELLBEING IS IMPORTANT

- Get enough sleep and minimise your stress levels.
- Take good care of yourself (love yourself and boost your own self-esteem).
- Get social support, including support in developing and maintaining personal, family and social relationships.
- Exercise and eat healthy meals.



## TREATMENT OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Seek help urgently from a private doctor or your local clinic if you notice any signs of mental illness. The doctor may refer you to a psychiatrist or psychologist for further management of your medical condition.

- To access your Mental Health Programme Benefits, your treating doctor must send your prescription to the Scheme's chronic medication department at [chronic@sizwehosmed.co.za](mailto:chronic@sizwehosmed.co.za)
- The treatment benefit for mental illness is offered across all Sizwe Hosmed plans. The member must register on the Sizwe Hosmed Disease Risk Programme at [wellnessqueries@sizwehosmed.co.za](mailto:wellnessqueries@sizwehosmed.co.za) or contact us at **0860 103 455**.
- If you are having suicidal thoughts, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1 800 273 8255**.