

Mental Health Disclosure

A REPOSITORY OF RESOURCES RELATED TO DISCLOSURE

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On Community Inclusion of Individuals with Psychiatric Disabilities

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The purpose of this document is to provide information regarding disclosure and nondisclosure in a variety of settings and/or situations related to community participation.

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How to use this document:

The decision to share information about one's mental health diagnosis and history is personal. There may be a time when someone feels the decision to disclose is important to his or her employment, education, relationship, or other area of community participation.

The purpose of this document is to provide information regarding disclosure and nondisclosure in a variety of settings and/or situations related to community participation. The introduction defines disclosure and provides suggestions about what to consider when contemplating whether disclosure is right for you. The second half of the document provides a number of resources focused on disclosure. These resources are divided into sections based on the circumstance in which disclosure is being considered (i.e., relationships, employment, places of worship, etc.).

Introduction

Many of us already understand that mental health is a crucial component of human health because it is equally as essential to one's well-being as physical health. This is why normalizing conversations about mental health and wellness is so important, particularly conversations surrounding mental health disclosure or nondisclosure. However, for many reasons, it can be difficult to put this into practice.

Mental health disclosure decisions can have an impact on community participation. This is because individuals who disclose can be subject to discrimination and increased stigma, which can negatively impact community participation. For instance, if someone decides to share details about their mental health condition with their community, they may as a result experience rejection and discrimination from their fellow community members. If this happens, this person could avoid social gatherings, volunteer opportunities or community events due to worries of being misunderstood or treated differently. They may even withdraw from activities they once enjoyed, isolating themselves further. This withdrawal can diminish their sense of belonging within their community, which can ultimately decrease their participation over time.

Conversely, deciding to disclose details about one's mental health condition may lead to improvements in one's mental and physical health, which can have a positive impact or even increase community participation.¹² For example, if someone with anxiety decided to share their experience(s) with a close friend, their disclosure may result in feeling more accepted and valued, which could lead to an increase in their community participation. Through their vulnerability, they may inspire others to embrace their own mental health journeys and engage in community initiatives as well.

What is disclosure?

Disclosure can be defined as a point in time in which an individual experiencing a mental health challenge tells someone else something about their condition. This may include their diagnosis, along with the full or partial history of their mental illness. Disclosure often occurs in the context of employment or job accommodations, but that isn't always the case. Disclosure can also occur within familial relationships, friendships, acquaintanceships, romantic relationships or within educational settings/learning environments.

When considering disclosure, it is important to remember that you are the expert on your own mental illness, making you capable of deciding for yourself when, where, why, and to whom it is best to disclose this information. For example, some individuals benefit from telling family and friends, while others may find it beneficial to tell their romantic partner(s) and wait to tell others. In other instances, some individuals may only find it beneficial to disclose details about their mental health to their employer for accommodation purposes.

Mental Health Disclosure

can be defined as a point in time in which an individual with a serious mental illness decides to tell someone else something about their condition.

What does the research say about disclosure?

Most academic literature about mental illness disclosure is consistent in its findings and recommendations. Researchers suggest that people experiencing a mental illness face two primary challenges related to disclosure: symptoms and discrimination.⁹ Mental health symptoms may contribute to social withdrawal. Additionally, individuals with mental health diagnoses face social barriers. Some of the most significant social barriers include external stigma and discrimination. Stigma and discrimination may contribute to limited access to mental healthcare, employment discrimination, housing insecurity, and limited social support. Limited access to these resources may reduce an individual's desire to disclose. That is, they may believe disclosure might threaten already scarce resources, like disclosing to one's landlord may put their housing at risk. The individual and social factors can impact an individual's decision to disclose their mental illness to others. Furthermore, these barriers can hinder an individual's ability to participate in their community and can result in an individual feeling as though they must hide their challenges from others.⁹



Disclosure decisions have a notable impact on social interactions, one's sense of belonging, and physical and psychological well-being.⁸ Compared to physical disabilities, which are often visible, one's mental illness is often concealable. Therefore, individuals face the decision of whether to disclose their mental health condition to others. The decision to disclose a mental illness can have social and personal consequences. While choosing not to disclose may protect someone from discrimination, deciding to disclose may increase social support and facilitate help-seeking behaviors.⁸ Non-disclosure may protect an individual from stigma and discrimination, but it may make it more difficult

for individuals to find or seek social support and participation accommodations; further burdening those remaining “in the closet” regarding their mental health diagnosis.⁸ Disclosing a mental illness, particularly to one’s family, is thought to potentially improve the quality of life and recovery outcomes of folks diagnosed with a mental health challenge.^{8,9} Disclosure provides individuals the opportunity to request reasonable accommodations that help sustain participation may increase or sustain community participation in the long run.¹⁰

Examples of potential reasonable accommodations include extra support with managing one’s workload, flexible work hours, the option to telecommute and/or work from home, changes to someone’s working arrangements or physical environment, and reduction of certain workplace noise.¹⁴

Educational accommodations are equally essential in ensuring equal access to educational opportunities and to supporting the academic success of students with mental health conditions. Some examples of potential reasonable accommodations include flexible attendance policies, extended test-taking time, alternative testing formats, and the implementation of individualized education plans (IEPs).

Additional examples of other potential reasonable accommodations that individuals with mental health conditions may benefit from include housing accommodations, transportation assistance, and financial assistance programs.

What demographic characteristics impact patterns of disclosure?

Generational Differences

Several studies suggest that there are generational differences that impact the frequency of, and the risks associated with the disclosure of an individual's mental illness. Mental illnesses, like depression and anxiety, are more stigmatized in older generations (Generation X and older).⁶ Additionally, mental health can be a taboo subject, with various misconceptions attached to it.

Choice is another important factor thought to contribute to the likelihood of conversation surrounding mental health. Mental illness(es) can never be chosen. Unfortunately, the false notion that you can 'switch-off' or 'stop over-thinking' is still prevalent within older generations, like Generation X.⁶ This generational gap is the consequence of misinformation and outdated solutions that need to be unlearned, to allow for the evolution of mental health diagnosis, disclosure, and self-advocacy to take place.

Numerous studies have identified that younger generations have higher levels of mental health literacy, making them better able to identify and recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness and are more knowledgeable of where to seek support.⁷ It is believed that the differences in technology and internet usage may influence mental health reporting and disclosure across generations.⁷ That is, greater access to information and more public sharing of mental health challenges may make disclosure easier. Furthermore, online platforms provide a degree of anonymity and privacy that may encourage individuals to disclose their mental health concerns more freely.

Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity are other demographic characteristics that impact disclosure. As stigma can be particularly significant for racial and ethnic minority groups, who often know less about mental illness, have less access to mental health services, and/or have lower quality experiences with mental health services.¹¹ Furthermore, cultural aspects influence how stigma manifests for different racial/ethnic groups. For example, in some cultures, seeking professional help for mental illness may go against the cultural values of being "strong", having emotional restraint and avoiding shame.¹³

Why might someone decide against disclosure?

First and foremost, the disclosure of an individual's psychiatric disability is a personal choice, not a requirement. Individuals who choose not to self-report their mental health condition are not "lying" or "hiding", they are simply utilizing a legally protected choice.¹ This is because the decision to disclose one's mental condition is a complex and consequential one. Current research even suggests that the discrimination and stigma related to mental disorders contributes to the current labor market disadvantage faced by

individuals with mental illnesses.² So, while disclosure may increase social support and facilitate help-seeking for individuals with mental illnesses, withholding disclosure may protect an individual from stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness.

What are the potential benefits associated with disclosure?

Although there are laws and protections in place to prevent discrimination, there is always a risk associated with disclosure in any situation or circumstance. However, disclosing one's mental illness can be the best course of action for some individuals. Current research reports that individuals who shared their mental health diagnosis with others found themselves more willing to seek help when struggling with their mental health. Furthermore, individuals who disclose were more informed about the appropriate places to find support and more likely to encourage others to seek support for themselves.⁴

This suggests that disclosing personal experiences with mental illness is beneficial both personally and societally. Other potential benefits of self-disclosure include feeling more authentic, gaining better self-acceptance and becoming less concerned with keeping your mental illness a secret from others.⁵

All in all, mental health disclosure can foster more open, understanding, and supportive community environments that encourage individuals to participate actively in community life, seek help when they need it and work to address mental health challenges collectively.

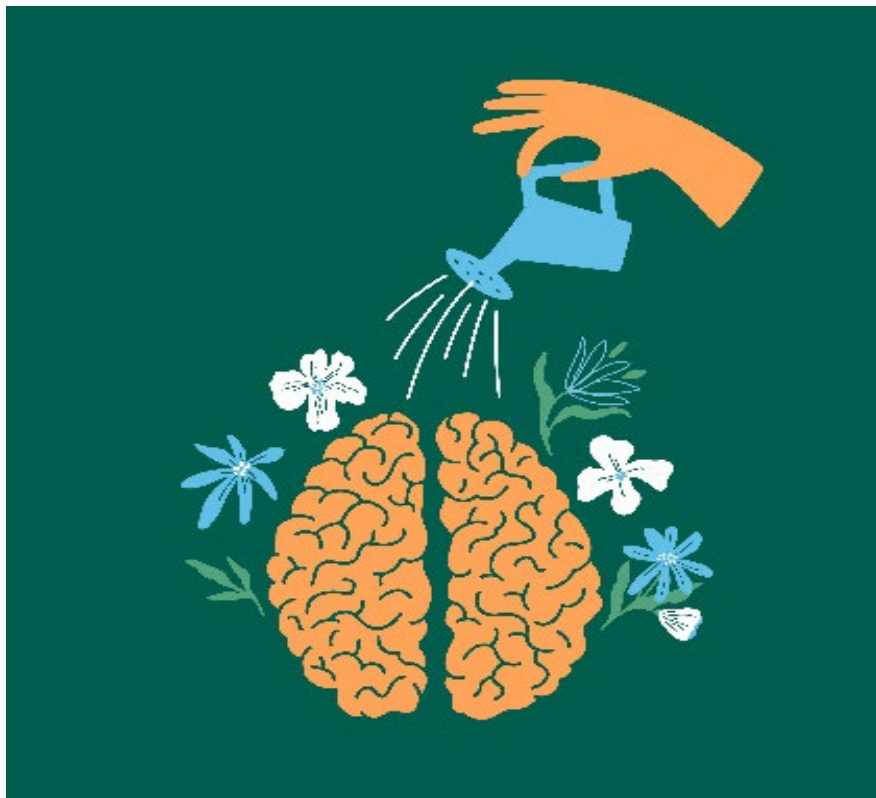
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The disclosure of an individual's
psychiatric disability is a personal
choice, not a requirement.

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What should you consider before disclosing your mental illness?

When deciding whether to disclose your mental health condition, it can be helpful to consider the pros and cons. Both the positives and negatives that accompany disclosure are different for everyone and thinking through them beforehand can help you decide what's best for you. Before disclosing to anyone in your professional life, it may be crucial to learn more about your legal rights as an employee. Following the disclosure of an individual's mental illness, some report experiencing stigma from their colleagues against their need for accommodations.³ This is why it can also be helpful to take your work environment into consideration, when deciding who to disclose to. When preparing to disclose your mental illness in personal relationships, it can be helpful to keep in mind which individuals are the most skillful at offering understanding and/or which of the people you feel closest to who are also good at listening and offering support during times of need or vulnerability.



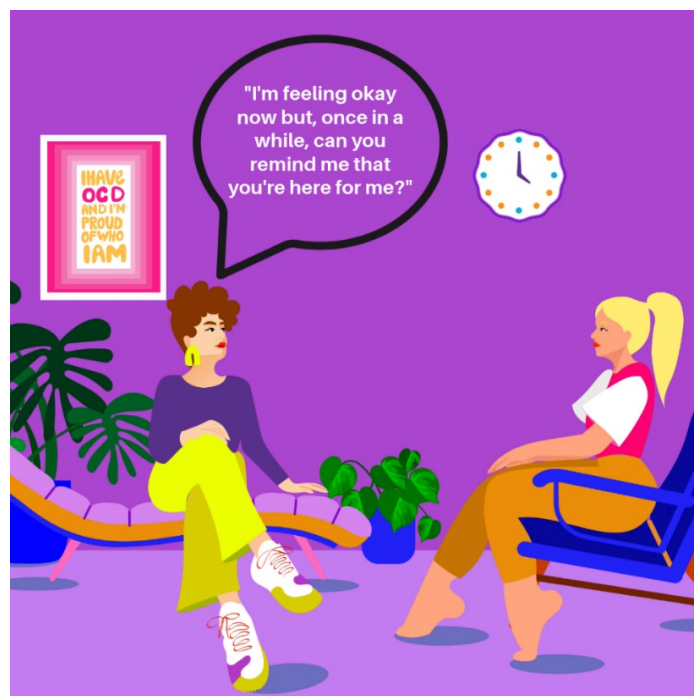
What can disclosure look like?

In any circumstance, personal or professional, it can be helpful to plan the conversation regarding the disclosure of your mental health condition. While there is no 'right' way to disclose, there are actionable steps that can make disclosure a lot less overwhelming.

Starting off by preparing your listener for this important conversation by including a disclaimer like "I want to talk to you about something important" or "I feel uncomfortable discussing this, but I think I need someone to talk to about how I've been feeling" is often beneficial for both you and your listener(s). It may also be worthwhile to consider starting the conversation by asking if your listener feels as though they have the space in that moment to have a conversation about how you've been feeling.

Next, it can be important to share concrete examples of what "mental illness" means for you, to ensure you receive the best support possible. Considering every case of mental illness is different it can be useful to share something like "I'm having trouble staying asleep most nights, I think there may be something wrong" or "The doctors told me I have bipolar disorder and I'm having a hard time managing my symptoms".

Lastly, it can be useful to end the conversation by suggesting ways to best support you. Your listener(s) may not know what they can do to help so, to ensure you get the best support possible, you should do your best to be specific. For instance, someone might say "I'm feeling okay now but, once in a while, can you remind me that you are here for me?" or "I'm not allowed to drink alcohol with my medications, can you please help keep me on track, especially in social situations".



MENTAL HEALTH DISCLOSURE: THE STEPS TO CONSIDER

A guide on how to disclose.

PLAN THE CONVERSATION

You can get the best support by planning the conversation. It may even be helpful to practice disclosing with a therapist or another mental health professional.

1

PREPARE YOUR LISTENER

2

This can be as simple as including a disclaimer like "I want to talk to you about something important" or "I feel uncomfortable discussing this, but I think I need someone to talk to about how I've been feeling".

SHARE CONCRETE EXAMPLES

Next, it can be important to share concrete examples of what "mental illness" means for you. It may be useful to share something like "I'm having trouble staying asleep most nights, I think there may be something wrong" for example.

3

SUGGEST WAYS THEY CAN BEST SUPPORT YOU

4

You may find it helpful to end the conversation by suggesting ways to best support you, in case your listener is unsure of how to help. For instance, someone might say "I'm feeling okay now but, once in a while, can you remind me that you are here for me?".

Conclusion

You are in charge of your disclosure. So ultimately, you get to decide to whom, where, how, and if you disclose. However, the reactions of others are beyond your control, so it is important to be confident and proud of your decision to disclose regardless of the outcome.

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At times, it can feel unbearably difficult to talk to others about your mental health experiences, but it can also be very freeing and rewarding. The good news is that if you decide to talk about your mental health condition with your employer, family, members of your faith community, friends, or romantic partner(s), you're not the first person to do so and there are many resources available for those looking for support in navigating that process. That's where this document comes in handy, especially for those finding it difficult to disclose their mental health condition within their professional life and/or personal relationships. The only person that needs to know about your mental illness is you, but this repository of resources can be utilized to access the existing information and recommendations regarding disclosure. The rest of this document is geared towards sharing recommendations about disclosure that are situation and circumstance specific. These articles include the key findings, resources, and recommendations regarding disclosure from the past 5-10 years.

General Disclosure Resources/Recommendations

The following resources focus on disclosure in any situation, relationship, or circumstance. These resources include information that may be beneficial to someone who is just starting to think about what disclosure might look like for them.

Key Resources	Key Areas Addressed
Disclosing to Others <u>Author: NAMI</u>	Disclosure decisions can be hard to make so, this article by NAMI outlines the who, what, when, and why of disclosure.
How to tell people about your mental illness <u>Author: REACHOUT</u>	Receiving a mental illness diagnosis can be both scary and a relief. That's because telling people about your mental illness can cause a great deal of anxiety and stress. This article provides advice on working out who to tell, how to tell them, and how to deal with the feelings that surface as you navigate disclosure.
Coming Out About Mental Illness <u>Author: WebMD</u>	This article talks about how to plan the disclosure of your mental health diagnosis in different situations. It also offers suggestions, in the event disclosure doesn't go well.
How to talk about your mental health concerns <u>Author: Health Direct</u>	Mental illness can be a difficult this to talk about, but for some it can be extremely beneficial. This article discusses how to start conversations about disclosure with your employer, friends, or partner.

Stigma, discrimination, and mental illness

Author: Better Health Channel

This article outlines the harmful effects of stigma and provides suggestions on how to both challenge and deal with stigma.

Words Matter: Reporting on Mental Health Conditions

Author: American Psychiatric Association

The media plays a critical role in the advancing our understand of mental illness. This article focuses on providing suggestions and tips on how to report stories about individuals with mental health challenges accurately.

Let's Face It, No One Wants to Talk About Mental Health

Author: Mass General Brigham McLean

This article discusses the roles of the family, gender, race, and sexuality on one's experience with mental health related stigma. It also talks about the portrayal of mental health in the media and the seven ways we can "stamp out stigma".

5 Reasons We Need to Discuss Mental Illness

Author: The Recovery Village

This article outlines 5 reasons why it is important to normalize discussions about mental health challenges.

It's Okay To Talk About Mental Health

Author: University of Utah

There's a high chance you've noticed when a loved one appeared anxious or depressed and were unsure of how-to check-in with them. It can be hard to talk about mental health, let alone ask someone else about their own. This article discusses how you can approach a friend, colleague, or family member regarding your concerns about their mental health.

**Five Reasons to Share Your Mental
Health Struggles**

Author: Greater Good Science Center

Talking about mental health can reduce the stigma associated with mental health conditions and help those struggling find support and connection. This article explores the potential benefits of mental health disclosure.

Resource Title	Resource Type	Full Citation
Disclosing to Others	Article	National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Disclosing to Others. NAMI. https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Individuals-with-Mental-Illness/Disclosing-to-Others
How to tell people about your mental illness	Article	REACHOUT. (n.d.). How to tell people about your mental illness. https://au.reachout.com/articles/how-to-tell-people-about-your-mental-illness
Coming Out About Mental Illness	Article	Bonvissuto, D., Nazario, B. (2022, March 21). Coming Out About Mental Illness. WebMD. https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/features/coming-out-about-mental-illness
How to talk about your mental health concerns	Article	Health Direct. (2022, September). How to talk about your mental health concerns. https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/how-to-talk-about-your-mental-health-concerns
Stigma, discrimination, and mental illness	Article	Better Health Channel. (2015, September 18). Stigma, discrimination, and mental illness. https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/stigma-discrimination-and-mental-illness
Words Matter: Reporting on Mental Health Conditions	Article	American Psychiatric Association. (n.d.). Words Matter: Reporting on Mental Health Conditions. https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/reporting-on-mental-health-conditions
Let's Face it, No One Wants to Talk About Mental Health	Article	McLean: Putting People First in Mental Health. (2023, April 30). Let's Face it, No One Wants To Talk About Mental Health. Mass General Brigham McLean. https://www.mcleanhospital.org/essential/lets-face-it-no-one-wants-talk-about-mental-health
5 Reasons We Need to Discuss Mental Illness	Article	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2022, May 26). 5 Reasons We Need to Discuss Mental Illness. SAMHSA. https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/mental-health/5-reasons-to-discuss-mental-illness/
IT'S OKAY TO TALK ABOUT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH	Article	Huntsman Mental Health Institute. (2021, May 06). It's Okay To Talk About Mental Health. https://healthcare.utah.edu/hmhi/news/2021/05/its-ok-talk-about-mental-health
Five Reasons to Share Your Mental Health Struggles	Article	Allen. S. (2021, June 23). Five Reasons to Share Your Mental Health Struggles. Greater Good Science Center. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_reasons_to_share_your_mental_health_struggles

Disclosure in the Workplace

The following resources focus on disclosure in the workplace. Some of these articles outline the necessary steps to take before, during and after disclosing to an employer, colleague, or Human Resources. While other articles primarily serve as guides to disclosure in the workplace. Each of these resources include a series of suggestions, advice, and/or tips to help individuals: manage disclosure conversations, self-advocate, and acquire workplace accommodation(s) if necessary.

Key Resources

Key Areas Addressed

**Transforming Lives Through Supported
Employment (SE) Program**
Author: SAMHSA

The Supported Employment program seeks to help people with a mental health condition(s) to participate in the competitive labor market, by helping them discover paths of self-sufficiency and recovery. To learn more about SAMHSA's SE program grant distribution and grantee profiles, [click here!](#)

**Mental Health Conditions in the
Workplace and the ADA**
Author: ADA National Network

This ADA factsheet includes practical points about disclosure & nondisclosure in the workplace. It also discusses: the myths & misperceptions about disclosure in the workplace, and the existing legal protections for employees with mental health disorders.

**Should You Disclose a Mental Illness to
Your Employer**
Author: The Lacy Employment Law Firm

This article focuses on an employee's protections under law as outlined by the ADA and EEOC. Additionally, it highlights potential strategies for disclosing to your current or future employer(s).

**Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination
Against People with Mental Illness**
Author: American Psychiatric Association

The facts on stigma, prejudice, and discrimination as it relates to mental health disclosure in the workplace, are the focus of this article. In addition, it includes strategies on how we can address mental illness stigma according to what current research suggests.

Succeeding at Work
Author: NAMI

This article focuses on an employee's protections under law as outlined by the ADA, FMLA, and the Rehab Act of 1973. It provides specific examples of reasonable accommodations and outlines the necessary steps to consider when requesting them. In addition, it includes a variety of legal options available to those who feel they have been discriminated against because they've disclosed their mental illness at work.

**What Happens When Workers Disclose a
Mental Illness Like Bipolar Disorder at
Work**
Author: UPENN

Many employees fear the stigma associated with disclosure, and rightfully so. However, a recent LDI study at UPENN has identified that disclosure can increase support for an employee's job/role. This article outlines the findings of their study and includes information relevant to both employees and employers on how to reduce stigma and create more inclusive work environments.

Mental Health Conditions
Author: Job Accommodation Network

This article focuses on providing advice, ideas and suggestions to employers looking to learn more about how to better accommodate employee's experiencing mental health challenges.

Resource Title	Resource Type	Full Citation
Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment (SE) Program	Article	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2022, April 21). Transforming Lives Through Supported Employment (SE) Program. SAMHSA. https://www.samhsa.gov/criminal-juvenile-justice/grant-grantees/transforming-lives-through-supported-employment-program
Mental Health Conditions in the Workplace and the ADA	Article	ADA National Network. (n.d.). Mental Health Conditions in the Workplace and the ADA. https://adata.org/factsheet/health
Should You Disclose A Mental Illness to Your Employer	Article	The Lacy Employment Law Firm. (n.d.). Should you Disclose a Mental Illness to your Employer?. https://employment-labor-law.com/should-you-disclose-a-mental-illness-to-your-employer/
Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination Against People with Mental Illness	Article	American Psychiatric Association. (n.d.). Stigma, Prejudice and Discrimination Against People with Mental Illness. https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/stigma-and-discrimination
Succeeding at Work	Article	National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Succeeding at Work. NAMI. https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Individuals-with-Mental-Illness/Succeeding-at-Work
What Happens When Workers Disclose a Mental Illness Like Bipolar Disorder at Work	Article	National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Succeeding at Work. NAMI. https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Individuals-with-Mental-Illness/Succeeding-at-Work
Mental Health Conditions	Article	Job Accommodation Network. (n.d.) Accommodation and Compliance: Mental Health Conditions. https://askjan.org/disabilities/Mental-Health-Conditions.cfm

Disclosure in Close Relationships

If you're currently living with a mental health condition you might find it worrisome to consider disclosing to your friends, family, or romantic partner. The following resources include information, and suggestions for folks looking to: decide whether to disclose or follow through with disclosing. Several of these serve as self-guides for disclosure in friendships, romantic and familial relationships. Other resources focus on providing support, suggestions, and advice to individuals who have significant other's living with a disclosed mental health condition(s). All these resources provide useful input when it comes to deciding who to disclose to, when to disclose, and how to do it.

Disclosure in Romantic Relationships

Key Resources

Key Areas Addressed

**Romantic Relationships and
Disclosing Mental Health
Struggles**
Author: Medium

Whether or not disclosure is an obligation for those in romantic partnerships is a difficult question to answer. This article's author explores the reasons why they believe mental health disclosure conversations are important to maintaining healthy relationships.

**How to Disclose Your Mental
Health Condition to a Partner**
Author: Verywell Mind

Having to tell others about your mental health condition is scary, to say the least. This can largely be attributed to internalized stigma – which can cause concerns over sharing your diagnosis with loved ones. This article includes suggestions on how to determine the right time to disclose to your partner. As well as strategies that can be helpful to consider when disclosing to your romantic partner.

**Telling Your Partner About Your
Mental Health Diagnosis**
Author: NAMI

Disclosing to your partner is a process that can be met with a multitude of emotions (i.e. anxiety, uncertainty). This article explores the realities of disclosure from the perspective of an author with lived experience. It focuses on the positive outcomes that can accompany disclosure in committed romantic relationships.

**How To Explain Mental Illness
to a New Significant Other**
Author: API

Dating can be increasingly difficult for those living with a mental illness. Some mental health conditions make it difficult for people to feel comfortable meeting new people or opening up to others. This article provides ideas and suggestions on how to approach mental health disclosure with a new partner in a way that feels most comfortable to you.

**Diagnosis Disclosure as A
Partner with Mental Illness**
Author: Giddy

Discussing your mental health with your partner is overwhelming for a few reasons, especially because there is no way to predict their response. This article focuses on why, no matter how scary it may seem, disclosing to your partner can be a worthwhile decision.

**Experts explain how to talk to
your partner about mental
illness**
Author: INSIDER

Conversations about mental health are tricky, no matter the circumstance. However, there are tools to discuss your mental health with your significant other in a way that is beneficial for both of you. This article discusses what those tools are and how to put them into practice based on recommendations from mental health experts & professionals.

**When to Tell Someone About
Your Mental Illness**
Author: Bustle

Disclosure is one of the bigger challenges faced by those of us who are mentally ill and dating. The question(s) of when, where, how, etc. can feel particularly difficult to answer. This article explores the expert answers to those questions, as they tend to vary by case and by severity of disorder.

How essential is it to disclose a mental illness to someone you are dating?

Author: SMH.com

When your spouse is living with a mental health condition, it can place undue strain on your relationship and create unforeseen challenges specific to them or your entire family. This guide was developed for individuals who have a spouse living with schizophrenia to share information specific to their needs. The goal of the guide is to acknowledge the impacts of one's mental illness on their spouse and to help them build health coping skill with their partners.

When to Reveal Your Mental Health Condition in a New Relationship

Author: The Mighty

Stigma surrounding mental health disorders is gradually disappearing. However, internalized stigma is still widely experienced by many of us diagnosed with a mental illness. This article discusses what to consider when deciding when and how to disclose to your new partner.

How to Talk about Mental Illness in a New Relationship

Author: Lifehacker

Dating can be difficult for anyone, but for those living with a mental illness, things can become increasingly complicated. Particularly when it comes to considering disclosure in a new or developing relationship. While there is no ideal point in time to disclose to a partner, this article focuses on how to disclose to your partner when you feel ready to do so.

How to Talk to Someone You're Newly Dating About Your Bipolar I Diagnosis

Author: SELF

It can be hard to consider the benefits to disclosing your mental illness to a partner because of how difficult it can be to do so. It can also be difficult to decide if you should disclose at all. This article focuses on strategies to consider as you decide whether and when to disclose to a partner, particularly if you've been formally diagnosed with Bipolar disorder.

Resource Title	Resource Type	Full Citation
Romantic Relationships and Disclosing Mental Health Struggles	Article	Millard, S. (2020, March 4). Disclosing Mental Health Struggles. Medium. https://srmillard.medium.com/romantic-relationships-and-disclosing-mental-health-struggles-7ec543f6b371
How to Disclose Your Mental Health Condition to a Partner	Article	Gupta. S., Kwong. I. (2023, September 12). How to Disclose Your Mental Health Condition to a Partner. Verywell Mind. https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-disclose-your-mental-health-condition-to-a-partner-5221277
Telling Your Partner about Your Mental Health Diagnosis	Article	Ryan. S. M. (2022, November 07). Telling Your Partner about Your Mental Health Diagnosis. NAMI. https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/November-2022/Telling-Your-Partner-about-Your-Mental-Health-Diagnosis
How To Explain Mental Illness To A New Significant Other	Article	Alvarado Parkway Institute Behavioral Health System. (2020, July 6). How To Explain Mental Illness To A New Significant Other. https://apibhs.com/2020/07/06/how-to-explain-mental-illness-to-a-new-significant-other
Diagnosis Disclosure As A Partner With Mental Illness	Article	Ellis. H. (2022, July 11). Diagnosis Disclosure As A Partner With Mental Illness. Giddy. https://getmegiddy.com/disclosure-partner-with-mental-illness
Experts explain how to talk to your partner about mental illness	Article	Campoamor. D. (2017, November 16). Experts explain how to talk to your partner about mental illness. BUSINESS INSIDER. https://www.businessinsider.com/talking-to-partner-mental-illness-expert-2017-11
When to Tell Someone About Your Mental Illness	Article	Thorpe. J. (2016, September 06). When To Tell Someone About Your Mental Illness. Bustle. https://www.bustle.com/articles/182327-when-to-disclose-your-mental-illness-to-someone-youre-dating
How essential is it to disclose a mental illness to someone you are dating?	Article	Moon. L. (2016, October 15). How essential is it to disclose a mental illness to someone you are dating?. The Sydney Morning Herald. https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/life-and-relationships/how-essential-is-it-to-disclose-a-mental-illness-to-someone-you-are-dating-20161014-gs2o4o.html
When to Reveal Your Mental Health Condition in a New Relationship	Article	Ananda. S. (2022, November 09). When to Reveal Your Mental Health Condition in a New Relationship. The Mighty. https://themighty.com/topic/mental-health/when-you-should-reveal-mental-illness-new-relationship/
How to Talk about Mental Illness in a New Relationship	Article	Yuko. E. (2020, October 22). How to Talk About Mental Illness in a New Relationship. LIFEHACKER. https://lifehacker.com/how-to-talk-about-mental-illness-in-a-new-relationship-1845451363

How to Talk to Someone You're Newly Dating About Your Bipolar Diagnosis	Article	Miller. K., Stern. J. (2023, May 11). How to Talk to Someone You're Newly Dating About Your Bipolar I Diagnosis. SELF. https://www.self.com/story/bipolar-1-dating-conversation
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Disclosure in Familial Relationships

Key Resources

Key Areas Addressed

For Friends and Family Members

Author: SAMHSA

Support from friends and family can make all the difference in a person's road to recovery. This article includes suggestions and resources for those who want to learn more about how to better support their loved one's living with a mental illness.

Time To Talk: Talking to Your Parents

Author: Mental Health America

Talking to a parent about mental health can be a daunting experience. Particularly because many of us fear that we will upset our parents by doing so. This article discusses some of the most common concerns people give for not talking to their parents. In addition, it includes tips and suggestions for overcoming them.

When to Tell Someone About Your Mental Illness

Author: Bustle

Disclosure is one of the bigger challenges faced by those of us who are mentally ill and dating. The question(s) of when, where, how, etc. can feel particularly difficult to answer. This article explores the expert answers to those questions, as they tend to vary by particular case and by severity of disorder.

Resource Title	Resource Type	Full Citations
For Friends and Family Members	Article	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023, April 24). For Family Members. SAMHSA. https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/how-to-talk/friends-and-family-members
Time To Talk: Talking To Your Parents	Article	Mental Health America. (n.d.). Time to Talk: Talking to Your Parents. MHA. https://www.mhanational.org/time-talk-talking-your-parents
When to Tell Someone About Your Mental Illness	Article	Thorpe. J. (2016, September 06). When To Tell Someone About Your Mental Illness. Bustle. https://www.bustle.com/articles/182327-when-to-disclose-your-mental-illness-to-someone-youre-dating

Disclosure in Friendships

Key Resources

Key Areas Addressed

For Friends and Family Members

Author: SAMHSA

Support from friends and family can make all the difference in a person's road to recovery. This article includes suggestions and resources for those who want to learn more about how to better support their loved one's living with a mental illness.

Friendship and Mental Health

Author: Mental Health Foundation

Maintaining healthy and supportive friendship(s) can play a crucial role in helping us care for our mental. This article focuses on providing support and suggestions for those wondering how to talk to their friends about their mental health. Or those looking to support a friend who has a mental health condition, while maintaining healthy boundaries.

When to Tell Someone About Your Mental Illness

Author: Bustle

Disclosure is one of the bigger challenges faced by those of us who are mentally ill and dating. The question(s) of when, where, how, etc. can feel particularly difficult to answer. This article explores the expert answers to those questions, as they tend to vary by particular case and by severity of disorder.

Resource Title	Resource Type	Full Citations
For Friends and Family Members	Article	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2023, April 24). For Family Members. SAMHSA. https://www.samhsa.gov/mental-health/how-to-talk/friends-and-family-members
Friendships and Mental Health	Article	Mental Health Foundation. (2021, August 13). Friendship and mental health. https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/a-z-topics/friendship-and-mental-health
When to Tell Someone About Your Mental Illness	Article	Thorpe. J. (2016, September 06). When To Tell Someone About Your Mental Illness. Bustle. https://www.bustle.com/articles/182327-when-to-disclose-your-mental-illness-to-someone-youre-dating

Disclosure in Places of Worship

The disclosure of mental illness in places of worship is a largely undiscussed topic. The following resources are here to help bridge that gap by providing suggestions and guidance from folks with lived experience. These resources may be useful to you if you have been contemplating what disclosure in your place of worship might look like. Or, if you're trying to decide if disclosing a mental illness diagnosis in your place of worship, is right for you.

Key Resources

Key Areas Addressed

Faith and Spirituality

Author: NAMI

Spirituality, religion, and faith can help some of us with mental health conditions live well. So much so, that some people find religion and individual spirituality to have a positive impact on their physical and mental health. This article focuses on the specific ways in which faith can help us care for our mental health. In addition, it discusses the attributes of welcoming faith communities, and includes suggestions for how faith communities can better support their mentally ill members.

How I dealt with Mental Health Discrimination in the Church

Author: NAMI

While faith, religion and spirituality can have positive impacts on those with a mental health condition, they can also be detrimental to mental health of some. This article discusses the lived experience of an individual faced with being open about their mental health struggles in their faith community. It also focuses on how they overcame the feelings of rejection that followed mental health disclosure in their church.

Resource Title	Resource Type	Full Citation
Faith and Spirituality	Article	National Alliance on Mental Illness. (n.d.). Faith & Spirituality. NAMI. https://www.nami.org/Your-Journey/Individuals-with-Mental-Illness/Faith-Spirituality
How I dealt with Mental health Discrimination in the Church	Article	Robertson. G. (2021, October 15). How I Dealt with Mental Health Discrimination in the Church. NAMI. https://www.nami.org/Blogs/NAMI-Blog/October-2021/How-I-Dealt-with-Mental-Health-Discrimination-in-the-Church

Disclosure for Children/Young Adults

General disclosure advice and suggestions may not translate well to younger audiences. This is because, most general disclosure resources focus on disclosure as it pertains to the workplace or one's professional life and/or romantic relationships. Thankfully, there are certain articles and resources on disclosure are written specifically for children and young adult audiences; you can find some of those resources listed below.

Key Resources

Key Areas Addressed

How to talk about Mental Health Issues
Author: Child Mind Institute

When teenagers and young adults are struggling with their mental health it can be difficult to seek support. Speaking up about your experience is the first step in getting help but it can be difficult to figure out how to approach the conversation. This article provides suggestions and things to consider for teens and young adults looking for support.

Talking to Parents About Depression
Author: Nemours

Many concerns accompany the thought of disclosing to your parents or another trusted adult. This article discusses those concerns/questions and provides solutions and suggestions for teens struggling to seek support for their mental health.

Teen Mental Health: How to Know When Your Child Needs Help
Author: American Academy of Pediatrics

As a parent, it can be difficult to determine how to best support your teenager when they are experiencing things like anxiety or depression. You may question whether the symptoms your child is experiencing are developmentally appropriate or if something more is going on. This article includes advice on how to detect the warning signs that may indicate your teen is experiencing mental health challenges. In addition, it includes helpful suggestions and things to consider for parents looking to support their teen or young adult as they navigate a mental health condition.

Resource Title	Resource Type	Full Citation
How to talk about Mental Health Issues	Article	Jacobson, R., Howard, J. (2023, April 27) How to Talk About Mental Health Issues. Child Mind Institute. https://childmind.org/article/talk-mental-health-issues/
Talking to Parents About Depression	Article	Lochrie, A. (2022, April). Talking to Parents About Depression. Nemours Teen Health. https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/talk-depression.html#:~:text=You%20can%20start%20just%20by,you%20to%20tell%20them%20more.
Teen Mental Health: How to Know When Your Child Needs Help	Article	Chung, R. (2023, July 31). Teen Mental Health. How to Know When Your Child Needs Help. HealthyChildren.org. https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/teen/Pages/Mental-Health-and-Teens-Watch-for-Danger-Signs.aspx

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