

Intro to Mental Health Response

Looking after our Wellbeing and of others

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute

March 26, 2024



Facilitated by Wynne Meyer, LMHC



What we'll discuss today

Mental health and Mental
Illness

Recognizing signs and
Responding

Caring for others; Caring for
yourself

Addressing Stigma

When to seek professional
help

Wrap up/Q&A

What is Mental Health?

Is it a state of mind?

Mental health is a positive concept. It encompasses one's overall emotional, cognitive, psychological and social well-being.

What then is Mental Illness?



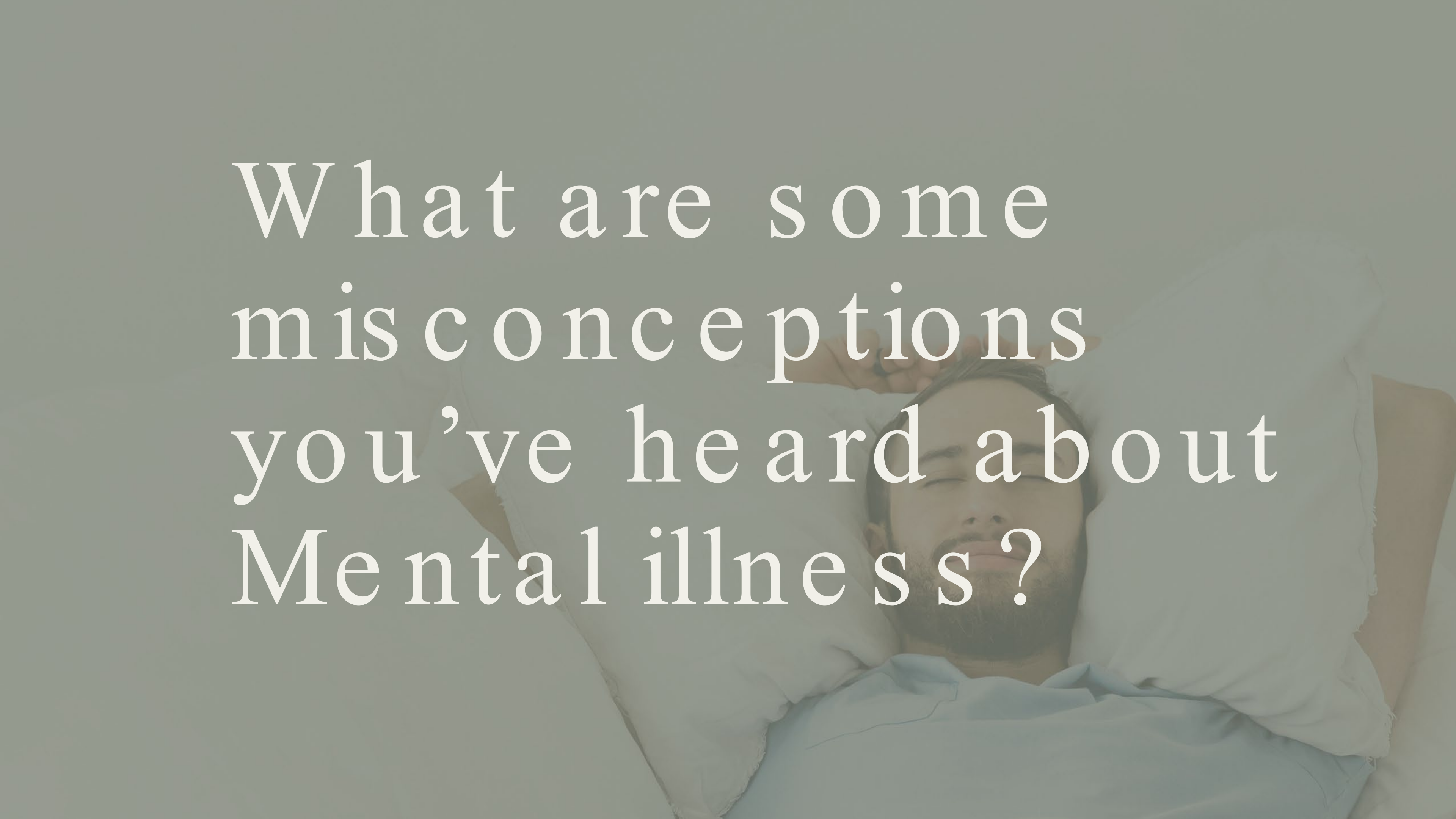
- ❑ Mental illnesses are diagnosable health conditions.
- ❑ Has significant impact on one's own and other's life.
- ❑ Mental illness does not discriminate.
- ❑ Mental Illness may be acute episodic or lifelong.
- ❑ Some mental illness can be related to or mimic medical conditions.

In the U.S. how many people
have a mental illness and don't
seek treatment?

Take a guess, What do
you think?

- 20 - 30%
- 30 - 40%
- 40 - 50%
- 50 - 60%

American Psychiatric Association, 2023



What are some
misconceptions
you've heard about
Mental illness?

Misconceptions:

- ❑ “it’s all in someone’s head”
- ❑ “they are not medical disorders”
- ❑ “people can snap out of it”
- ❑ “medication doesn’t work”
- ❑ “mentally ill people are violent”
- ❑ “it can’t happen to me”

Reality in the Workplace

- ❑ 55% of employees who say mental health is discussed in some way at work.
- ❑ 64% of managers say their Mental health affected their job in the last year, (57% for non-managers).
- ❑ 35 million workdays are lost each year due to a mental illness
 - Common reason for missing work and lower productivity
- ❑ 10.8 Million Full-time workers have a substance use disorder

Seafarer Mental Health Study

- ❑ 25% of individuals reported symptoms of depression.
- ❑ 17% of individuals scored high on anxiety symptoms.
- ❑ Depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation were associated with an increased likelihood of injury and illness while working on the vessel.
- ❑ Seafarers under 30 are more likely to face mental health issues as are those that are unmarried.



How can mental illness show up at work?

- Relationship difficulties
- Lack of cooperation or inability to work with others
- Emotion regulation
- Challenges in learning a job or new tasks
- Difficulty in tolerating stress or change
- Attendance/Tardiness
- Fatigue or unexplained pains/illnesses
- Problems concentrating, making decisions
- Difficulty maintaining expected work standards
- Decreased interest or involvement in one's work
- Person not effectively managing symptoms or medication side effects





Beyond the blues

RECOGNIZING
THE
SIGNS

Depression

Signs

- Loss of interest in all or almost all daily activities
- Feel tired all the time
- Feel worthless or excessive guilt
- Sleep too much or too little
- Eat too much or too little
- Not able to concentrate
- Indecisive

Statistics / Facts

- One of the most common mental health issues
- Not just “the blues”
- **About 18%** of total population are currently depressed.
- 2 to 3 times more likely diagnosed in women.
- Suicide can be (but not always) a concern

Anxiety

Signs



Excessive anxiety & worry

Difficult to control the worry

Restlessness or feeling “keyed up” or “on edge”

Tire easily

Difficulty concentrating or mind goes blank

Irritability

Muscle tension

Difficulty falling or staying asleep

ADHD

Symptoms



Difficulty sustaining attention on tasks/activities.

Lose things necessary for tasks/activities.

Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli.

Forgetful in daily activities.

Hyperactivity, often “on the go”

Fidgety or squirmy

Adults may appear restless

Talk excessively or fast

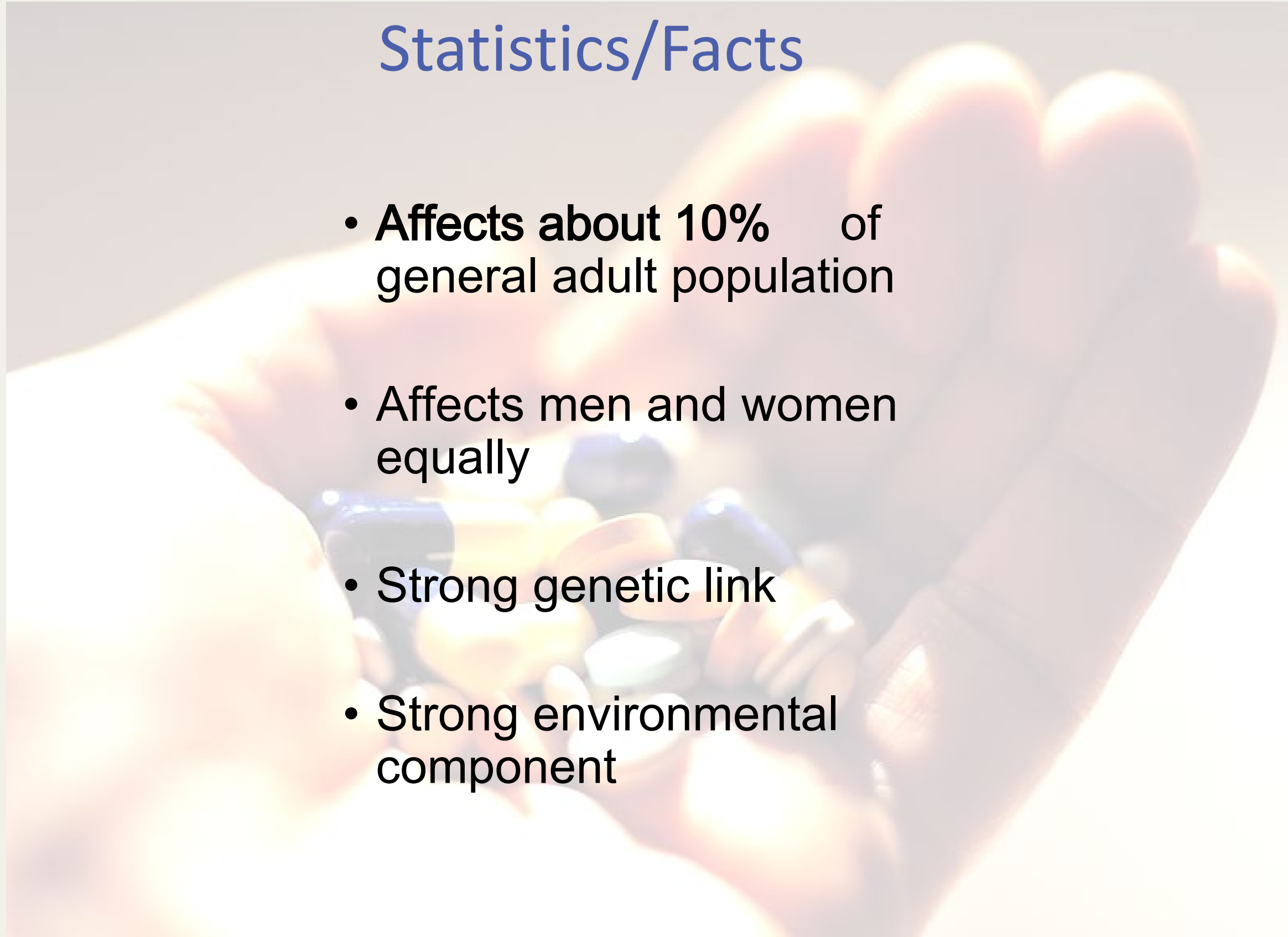
Substance Dependence

Signs

- Increased tolerance for substance
- Withdrawal symptoms
- Repeated failure to fulfill major life obligations
- Persistent thoughts / unsuccessful efforts to limit/control use
- Using consumes a lot of time

Statistics/Facts

- Affects about 10% of general adult population
- Affects men and women equally
- Strong genetic link
- Strong environmental component





What to DO?

TOOLS AND
GUIDELINES

Mental Health Response Action Plan

A
L
G
E
E



Assess for
Safety Risks



Listen non -
Judgmentally



Give reassurance
and
information



Encourage appropriate
professional help.

Encourage self-help
and other support
strategies.

What Not To Say To Others

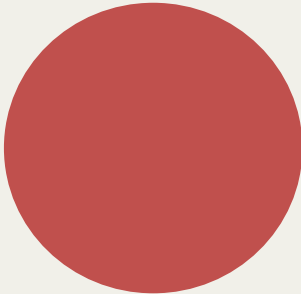
- “It could be worse.”
- “Just deal with it.”
- “Snap out of it.”
- “Everyone feels that way sometimes.”
- “We’ve all been there.”
- “You’ve got to pull yourself together.”
- “Maybe try thinking happier thoughts.”
- “I know how you feel.”
- “It’s not as bad as you think.”
- “It’s all in your head.”
- “You have a lot to be grateful for. Focus on that.”
- “Everyone goes through something. You’ll be fine.”
- “Just push through it ”



What To Say To Others

- “Thank you for telling me.”
- “Is there anything I can do to help?”
- “I’m sorry to hear this is happening for you. It must be so tough.”
- “I’m here for you.”
- “We don’t have to talk if you don’t want to and I’m happy to just be here with you.”
- “I can’t imagine what you’re going through.”
- “I’m here for you when you need me.”

Do
say...



What to do for others when “at sea”?

Tell them you care and want to be supportive.

LISTEN: If possible, give them space to talk and feel heard.

Acknowledge that you see they aren't feeling their best or are worried about them.

Ask them what they need from you to support them during the expedition.

Concerned about immediate harm to self and others - (coast guard, navy, seafarer help) until back on land.



What to do for Self?

- Acknowledge that you're not feeling your best..without guilt or shame
- Seek the support of a partner, family member or friend
- Acknowledge that you may need professional support and that's ok
- See your doctor and ask for a referral, if necessary. Call EAP.
- Make sure to take minibreaks.

When do I seek professional help?



SELF CARE & SOCIAL SUPPORT

PROFESSIONAL CARE

HEALTHY

Normal Functioning

Normal mood fluctuations.
Takes things in stride.
Consistent performance.
Normal sleep patterns.
Physically and socially active. Usual self-confidence
Comfortable with others.

REACTING

Common & Reversible Distress

Irritable/Impatient.
Nervousness, sadness, increased worrying.
Procrastination, forgetfulness. Trouble sleeping (more often in falling asleep) Lowered energy. Difficulty in relaxing.
Intrusive thoughts.
Decreased social activity.

INJURED

Significant Functional Impairment

Anger, anxiety. Lingering sadness, tearfulness, hopelessness, worthlessness.
Preoccupation. Decreased performance in academics or at work. Significantly disturbed sleep (falling asleep and staying asleep).
Avoidance of social situations, withdrawal.

ILL

Clinical Disorder. Severe & Persistent Functional Impairment.

Significant difficulty with emotions, thinking High level of anxiety, Panic attacks.
Depressed mood, feeling overwhelmed Constant fatigue. Disturbed contact with reality Significant disturbances in thinking
Suicidal thoughts/intent/behaviour.



Ways to Promote Mental Health At work



Check in with people regularly, especially during changes and challenges.



Be an ambassador for Employee Assistance Program (EAP)



Promote work-Life integration by talking about it and modeling well-being.



Free self-assessment tools

Support is available



Toll-free Telephone: 800-648-9557 (24/7)

Confidential Counseling and resources available by phone, video and message/text

Manager Consults Available

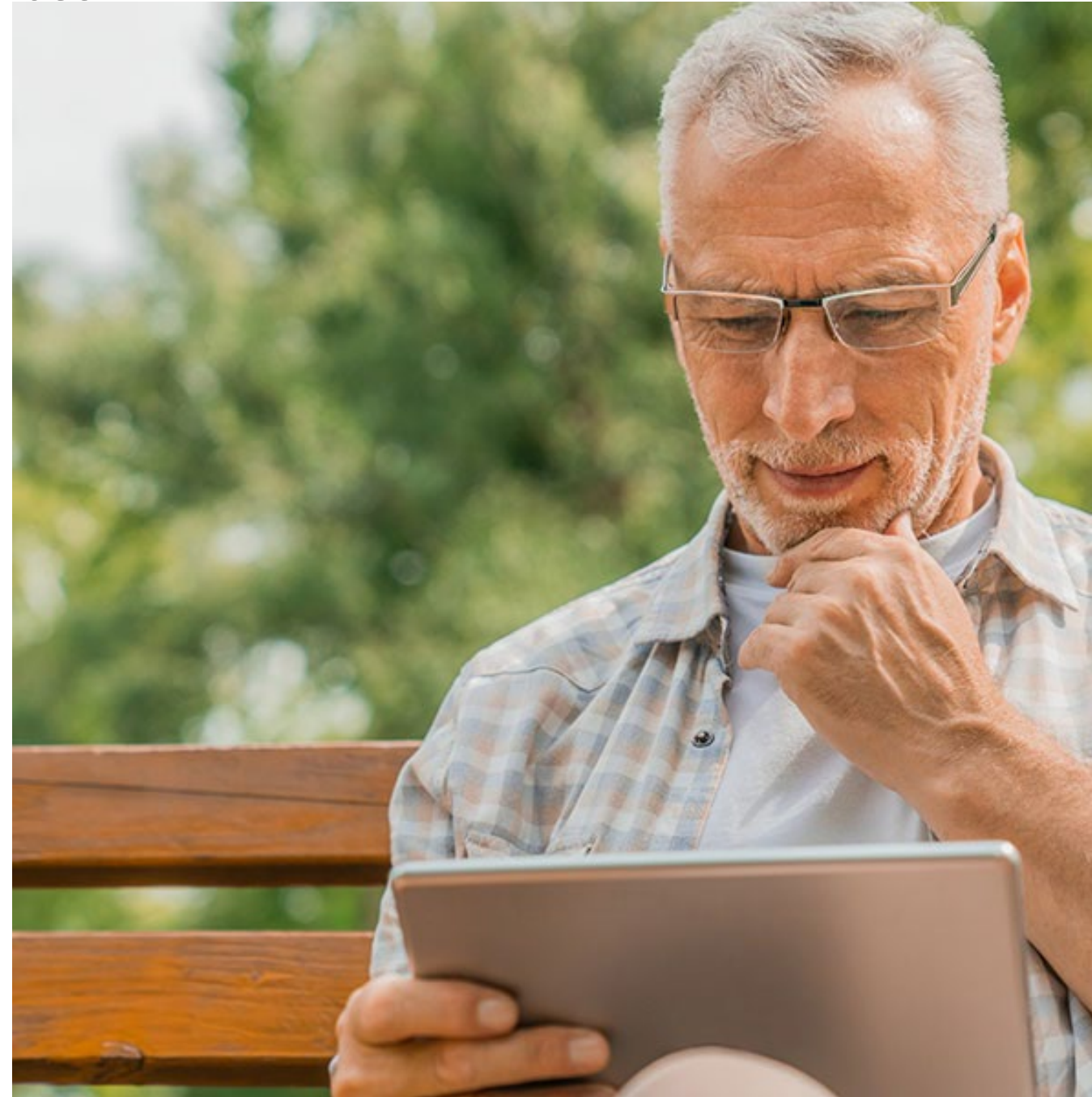
Online:

My.KGALifeServices.com

Organization code: **whoi**

- Live chat: 8:30am-5:00pm EST
- Self-schedule with KGA
- Self assessments

Email: info@kgreer.com



- Counseling and Referrals
- Work/Life Resources
- Child/Eldercare consults
- Legal/Financial Consults

KGA's free app, [KGA Mobile](#)



A few more Resources

Seafarer Help

Lifeline for seafarers
+44 20-7323-2737
(Get the app)

Mission to Seafarers

<https://www.missiontoseafarers.org/>

Call 2 Talk

Mental Health and Suicide Line
9-8-8

NAMI

Mental Illness Support
800-950-NAMI

SAMHSA

Substance use resources
and referrals

1-800-662-4357

ADDA

Helpline and resources
add.org

Samaritans

Suicide and depression
1-877-870-Hope

Thank You!

