

*“Exploring the Intersection of  
Mental Health and Housing.”*

# Facts About Mental Health Conditions

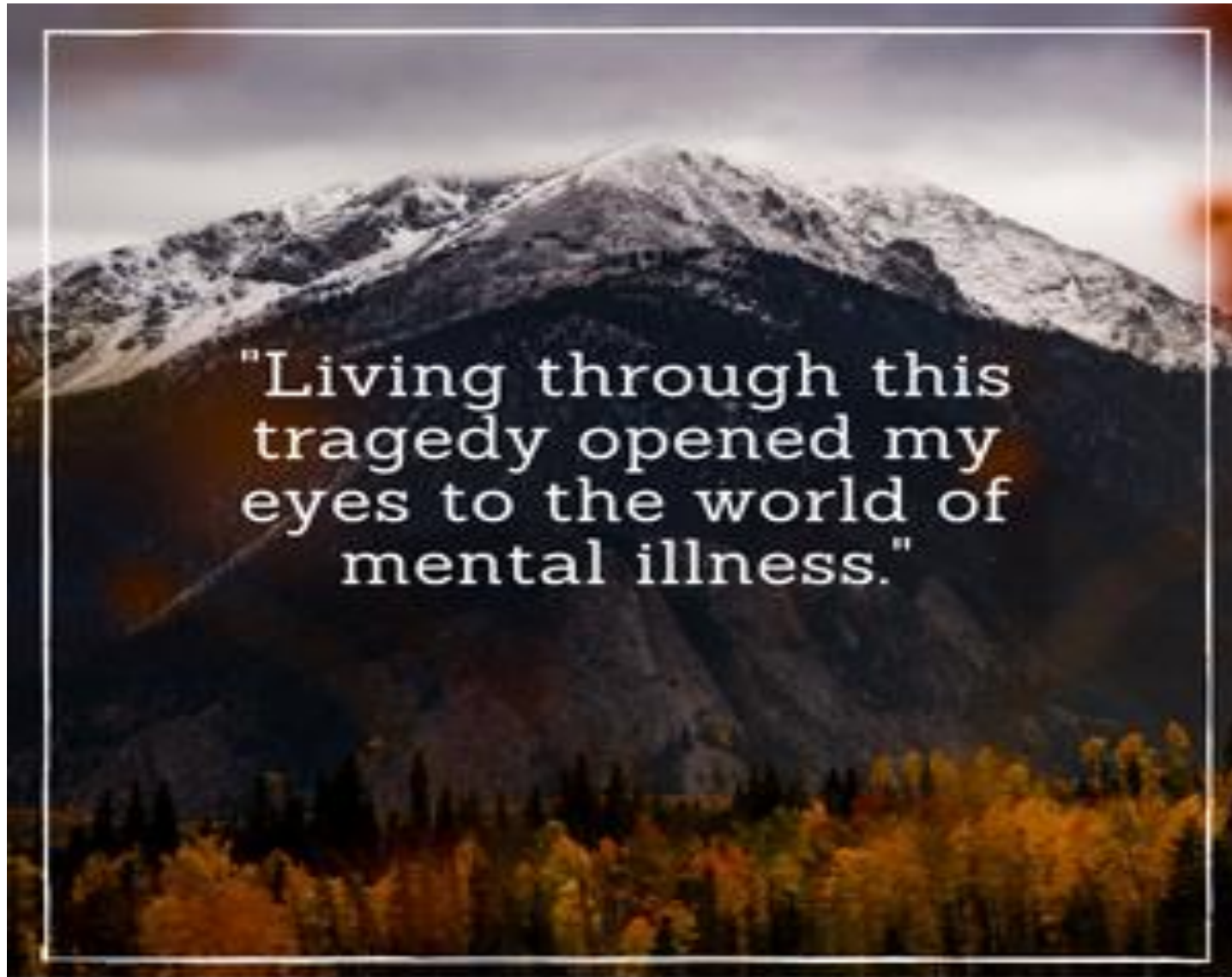
**Mental health conditions (Mental Illness)** go beyond “normal” emotional reactions and become something longer lasting.

- They are medical conditions that cause changes in how we think and feel and in our mood.
- They are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing.

**A mental illness** regularly disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and function.

- One in 5 adults experiences a mental health condition every year.
- Half of mental health conditions begin by age 14, and 75% of mental health conditions develop by age 24.

Source: <https://www.nami.org>



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# 10 Common Warning Signs of A Mental Health Condition

1. Feeling sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks.
2. Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships.
3. Intense worries or fear that get in the way of daily activities.
4. Sudden overwhelming fears for no reasons.
5. Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself (or making plans to).
6. Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to loose weight.
7. Significant weight loss or gain.
8. Severe out of control risk taking behavior that could harm self or others.
9. Repeated use of drugs or alcohol.
10. Drastic changes in behavior, personality, or sleep habits.

# Every Human Being Deserves A Safe Place to Live

Abraham **Maslow** - **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.**

- In 1943 he proposed a theory that described the different **needs** that all humans have and the **hierarchy** in which those **needs** are **organized**.

Source: Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-96.

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



# The Connection Between Mental Health Conditions and A Stable Home

For someone with a mental health condition, the basic necessity of a stable home can be hard to come by.

- The lack of safe and affordable housing is one of the most powerful barriers to recovery.
- When this basic need isn't met, people cycle in and out of homelessness, jails, shelters and hospitals.
- Having a safe, appropriate place to live can provide stability to allow people to achieve their goals (including gaining and/or maintaining wellness).
- Many people with a serious mental illness live on SSI, which can make finding an affordable home near impossible.
- The stress of experiencing homelessness may exacerbate previous mental illness and encourage anxiety, fear, depression, sleeplessness and substance use.

# Everyone Deserves Good Housing

## Good Housing Meets 4 Basic Needs

- 1. Housing should be affordable.** Many people with mental illness may have low incomes. To meet housing costs they may need additional financial assistance, like government-funded rental assistance or rental subsidies.
- 2. Housing should offer the right amount of independence.** An important part of housing is the freedom to choose where and what type you want.
- 3. Housing should meet your physical needs.** If you have a mental illness and a physical disability you may need housing features like ramps. Many people with mental illness also may not drive and therefore would need a home close to treatment providers and community resources, as well as public transportation.
- 4. Housing should be discrimination-free.** The Fair Housing Act bars discrimination in rental housing based on disability. This means that landlords and property owners cannot refuse to rent to you because of a disability.

Source: <https://www.nami.org>



# Exacerbated Mental Health Issues Can Lead to Homelessness

- People with poor mental health are more susceptible to the three main factors that can lead to homelessness:
  - poverty
  - disaffiliation
  - personal vulnerability.
- Sometimes they lack the capacity to sustain employment resulting in them having little income.
- Delusional thinking may lead them to withdraw from friends, family and other supports.
- Mental illness can also impair a person's ability to be resilient and resourceful; it can cloud thinking and impair judgment. For all these reasons, people with mental illness are at greater risk of experiencing homelessness

Source: [homelesshub.ca](http://homelesshub.ca)

# Hoarding – A Barrier to Safe Housing

Hoarding is **a complex disorder**. As noted on the website for the International OCD Foundation (IOCDF) - Hoarding Center, **it is made up of three connected problems:**

- 1) collecting too many items,
- 2) difficulty getting rid of items, and
- 3) problems with organization.

These problems can lead to significant amounts of clutter which can severely limit the use of living spaces, pose safety and/or health risks, and result in significant distress and/or impairment in day-to-day living.

# Hoarding – A Barrier to Safe Housing

- impacting significant areas of individuals' lives including but not limited to:
- safety hazards such as falls (due to poor egress space), injuries, and fires;
- **housing crisis such as evictions, homelessness, loss of home ownership, condemnation of homes; unsanitary living quarters;**
- isolation, limited social supports and cycles of these negative outcomes.

# Hoarding – A Barrier to Safe Housing

- Hoarding issues not resolved will be transferred to a new location.
- Without interventions the quality of life and mental health of these individuals are unnecessarily compromised.
- Additionally, when individuals are evicted from their homes and forced to relocate without clinical intervention, it is common that they will repeat the same patterns in their new living environment.

# Hoarding – A Barrier to Safe Housing

Harm reduction:

- refers to clearing the buildup of clutter in areas such as egress paths or heat sources.
- The steps around harm reduction are particularly useful for reducing the risk among those with little or no insight into their hoarding behaviors, especially when continued monitoring of the environment is put into place (Rethinking Hoarding Intervention,

*Source: Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, January 2015).*

# Ways to intercept a mental health crisis to avoid a housing issue

- Recognize the warning signs.
- Encourage the person that help is available and to use it.
- Avoid making negative comments, judgements and stigmas.
- Know available resources.
- Mental Health First Aid Training

# Types of Housing

**Housing options range from completely independent living to 24/7 care.**

The type needed can depend on whether a person needs assistance paying bills, cleaning, making appointments or require no assistance at all.

## **1. Supervised Group Housing**

Provides the most support. **Trained staff members** are present 24/7 to provide care and assistance with things like medication, meals, paying bills, transportation and treatment management. **They provide** their residents with their own bed, dresser and closet space, and shared bathrooms and common areas. **The best type of housing for people experiencing a serious mental illness which may affect their ability to perform their daily tasks.**

## **2. Partially Supervised Group Housing**

Provides some support for the residents, but staff isn't there 24/7. Residents can be left alone for several hours and call for help if needed. People can perform their daily living tasks independently or semi-independently, help with cooking and cleaning and may even hold a part-time job or participate in a day program.

# Types of Housing – Cont'd

## 3. Supportive Housing

- Provides very limited assistance.
- Residents live almost independently and are visited by staff members infrequently.
- They do have someone to call and resources available to them if a problem does arise.

## 4. Rental Housing

- For someone who is completely independent. Rent can be paid for in full by the individual or subsidized by a third party, i.e. government.
- Can take care of all their basic needs, i.e. cooking, cleaning, etc.
- May have a job and have or be seeking custody of children.



# Delco Mental Health Crisis Resources

## Delaware County Crisis Connections Team (DCCCT)

- **Phone:** 1-855-889-7827
- **Hours:** 24 hours/day & 7 days/week

## **Crozer Chester Medical Center- Mental Health Crisis Services**

- **Phone:** 610-447-7600
- **Address:** 1 Medical Center Blvd  
Chester, PA 19013
- **Hours:** 24 hrs/day & 7 days/week

## **Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital Mental Health Crisis Services**

- **Phone:** 610-237-4210
- **Address:** 1500 Lansdowne Avenue  
Darby, PA 19023
- **Hours:** 24 hrs/day & 7 days/week

# Delco Mental Health (Non Crisis) Resources

## How to Make a Referral

- Referrals are made by calling or visiting one of our two county Base Service Units or by contacting the Behavior Health Managed Care Organization, Magellan Behavioral Health.
- Community Hospital, Crozer Chester Medical Center  
2600 W. 9th Street Chester, PA.  
**610-497-7700**
- Merakey (Formerly known as NHS Human Services of Delaware County)  
800 Chester Pike Sharon Hill, PA  
**610-534-3636**

# Delco Drug & Alcohol Treatment Resources

- **How to Access**
- **Treatment Services**
- Eligible county residents have three points of access
- Crozer Chester Medical Center 2600 W. 9th Street Chester, PA 610-497-7223
- KeyStone Center 2001 Providence Avenue Chester, PA 610-876-9000
- Merakey (formerly known as NHS Human Services of Delaware County) 800. Chester Pike Sharon Hill, PA 610-537-1765

# References

- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-96.
- *Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership, January 2015*).
- <http://homelesshub.ca>
- Source: <https://www.nami.org>