

# Mental Health & Victimization

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# Objectives

1

Define mental illness

2

Describe the prevalence of mental illness in the U.S.

3

Identify victimization and revictimization risk among persons with mental illness

4

Explore explanations for victimization risk among persons with mental illness

5

Examine the criminal justice system response to persons with mental illness

# What is mental illness??

- According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) (2014), mental illness “is a medical condition that disrupts a person’s thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning (n.p).”
- In general, a person is considered to have a serious mental illness (SMI) if he/she has a mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that is diagnosable according to DSM-5-TR criteria.
  - The disorder has to result in impairment (interferes with and/or limits major life activities) and have a duration of at least 1 year

# Types of Mental Illnesses



MENTAL HEALTH  
CONDITIONS

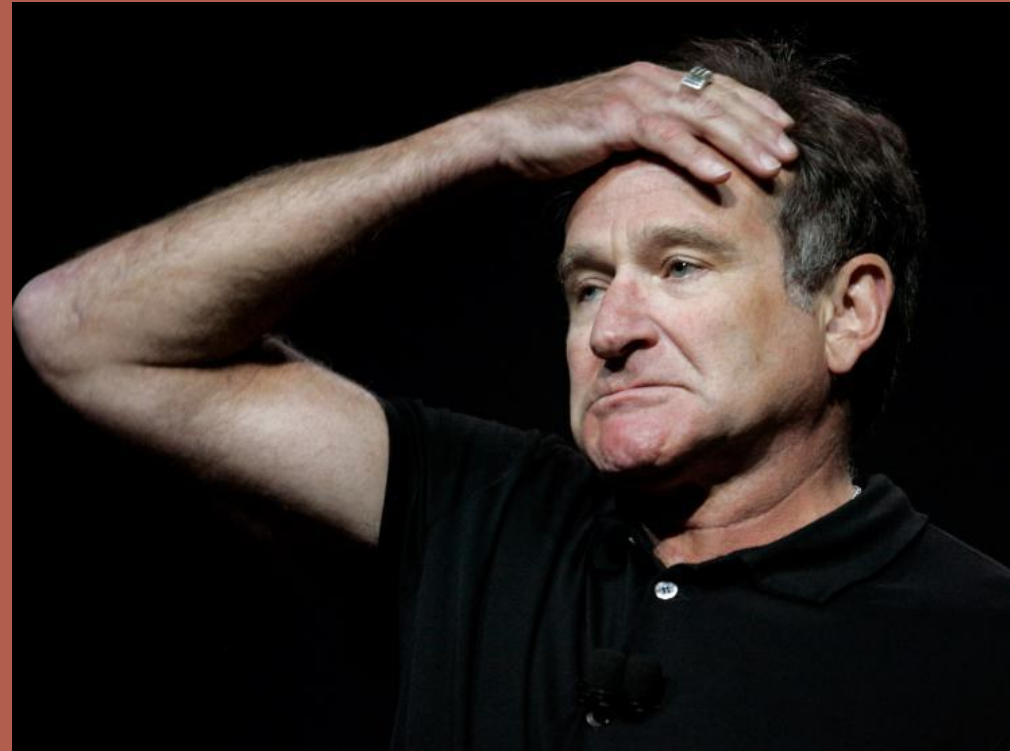


SCHIZOPHRENIA



# What is stigma??

Bring Change 2 Mind



# How common is mental illness in the U.S.? What about SMI?

What % of the US population  
experiences SMI?

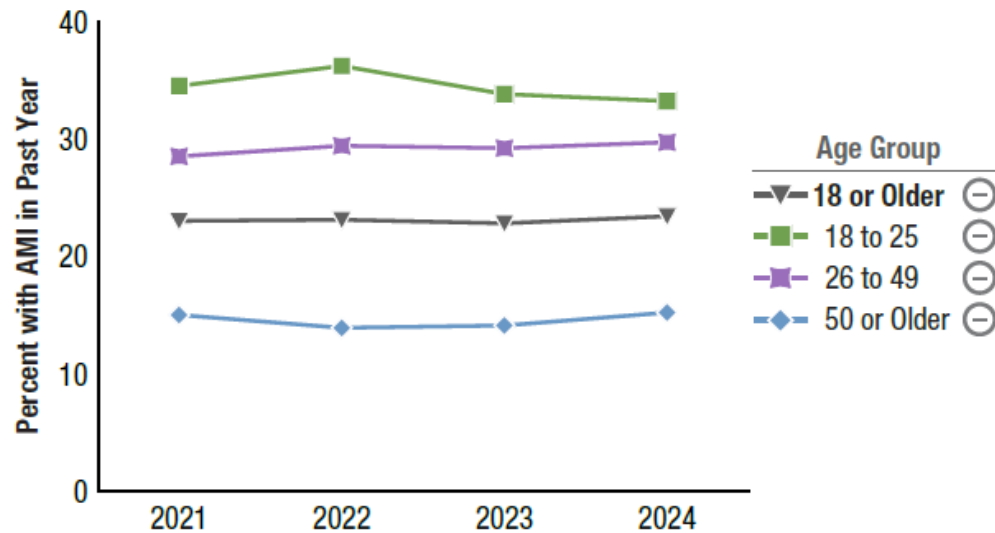
What are the trends in SMI in the US?

# National Institute of Mental Health Estimates

- Based on data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)
- In 2024, there were an estimated 61.5 million US adults who experienced any mental illness within the past year (roughly 1 in 5 US adults).
  - 2024: There were an estimated 14.6 million US adults who reported any serious mental illness in the past year (nearly 6% of all US adults).

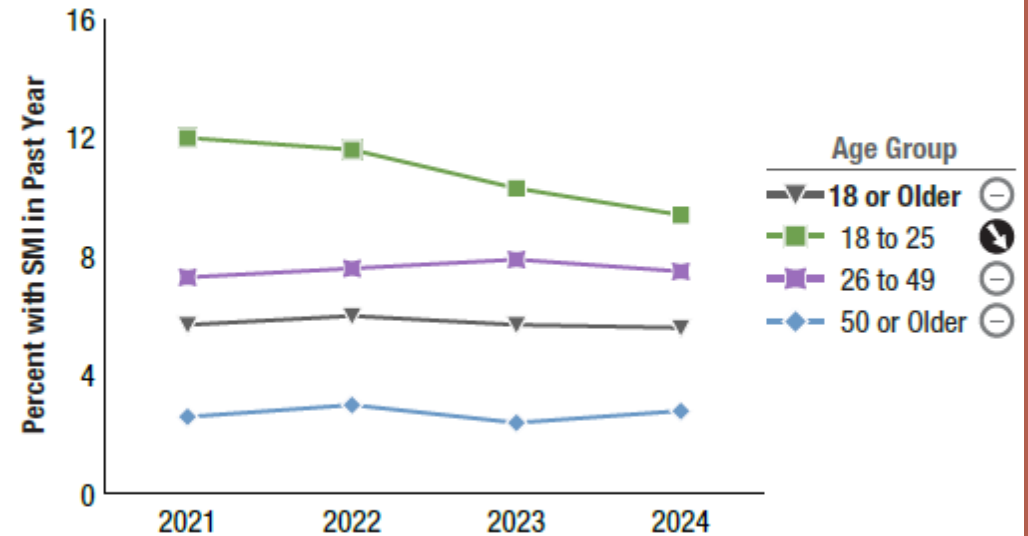
# 2023 Statistics – Any Mental Illness

**Figure 51. Any Mental Illness (AMI) in the Past Year: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older; 2021-2024**



Note: Estimates for 2021 may differ from previously published estimates because the 2021 analysis weights were updated to facilitate between-year comparisons.

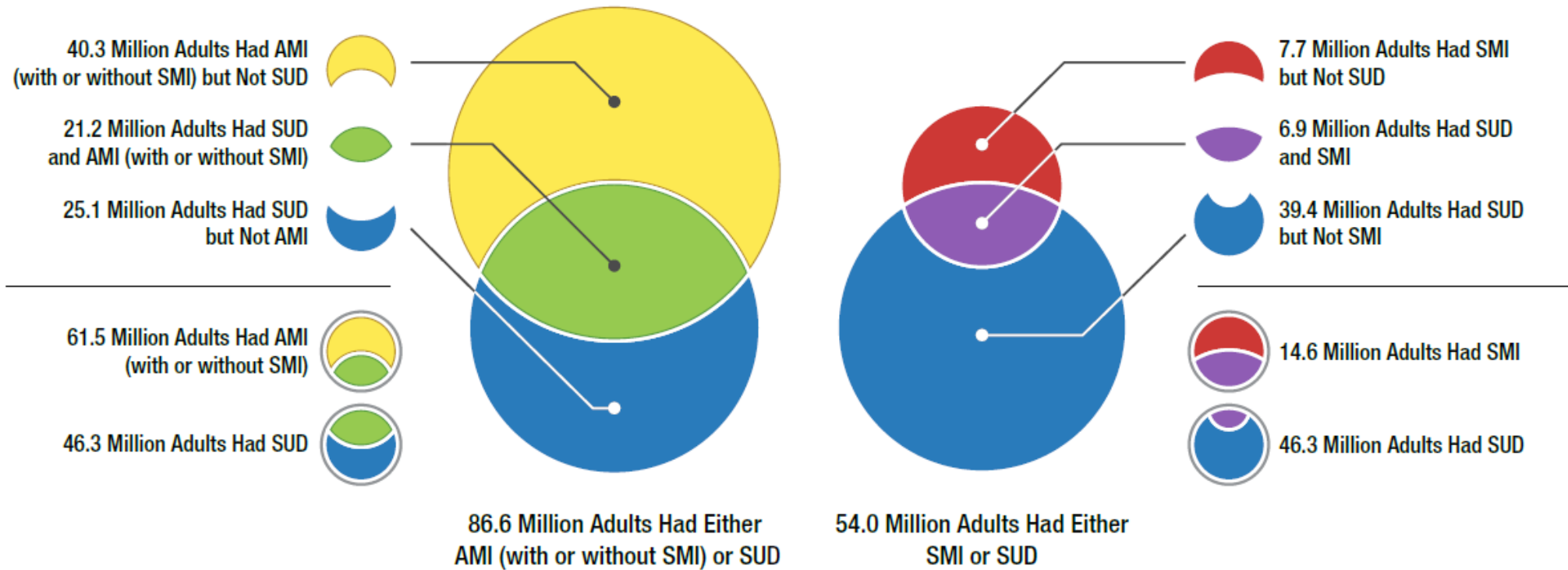
**Figure 52. Serious Mental Illness (SMI) in the Past Year: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older; 2021-2024**



Note: Estimates for 2021 may differ from previously published estimates because the 2021 analysis weights were updated to facilitate between-year comparisons.

# 2023 Statistics

**Figure 57. Any Mental Illness (AMI), Serious Mental Illness (SMI), or Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in the Past Year: Among Adults Aged 18 or Older; 2024**



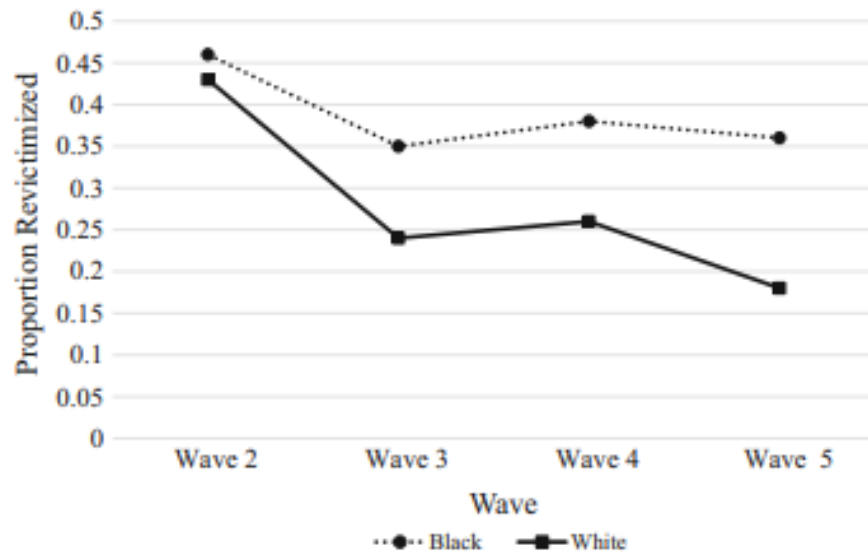
# How often are persons with SMI victimized?

How do the rates of victimization among persons with SMI compare to the victimization rates of the general population??

# Victimization among persons with MI

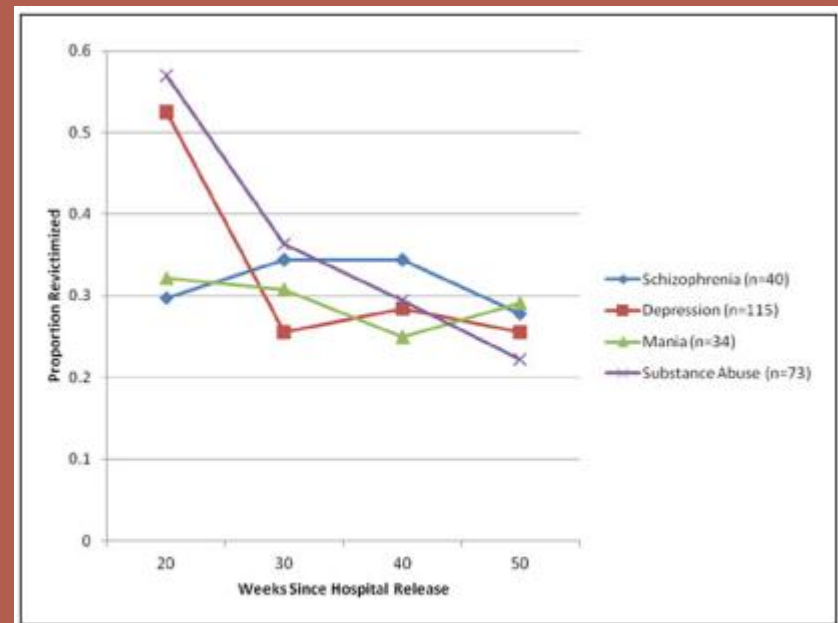
- This population has higher victimization risk than the general population.
  - Recent meta-analysis based on 30 studies established a pooled prevalence rate of 33% (for past year) (Rocha et al., 2025)

# Recurring victimization among persons with SMI



**Fig. 1** Proportion experiencing revictimization across time by race

Source of figure above: Policastro, C., Teasdale, B., & Daigle, L. E. (2016). The recurring victimization of individuals with mental illness: a comparison of trajectories for two racial groups. *Journal of quantitative criminology*, 32(4), 675-693.



**Figure 1.** Proportion experiencing recurring victimization across time, by disorder.

Teasdale, B., Daigle, L. E., & Ballard, E. (2014). Trajectories of recurring victimization among people with major mental disorders. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 29(6), 987-1005.

# Why such high rates of victimization among this population?

What makes persons with serious mental illness vulnerable to victimization?

# What explains higher victimization rates among persons with Mi/smi???

- Deinstitutionalization
- Homelessness, poverty, and substance abuse
- Ability to engage in self-protective action
- Violence
  - Symptomology
  - Conflicted social relationships

# Criminal Justice (CJ) Response to Persons with SMI

- Most of the CJ responses to persons with SMI are geared towards responding to offenders with SMI – not necessarily victims
- What may be some of the issues that victims with SMI face when interacting with the criminal justice system???
  - What barriers to help-seeking may they face?
  - Do you think programs/services are designed with them in mind?

# Responding to victimization among persons with Mi/SMI



Mental health and drug  
courts



Crisis Intervention Teams



Mental Health Treatment

# Police: Crisis Intervention Teams

- Originated in Memphis, TN
- Officers receive specialized training on how to deal with cases involving persons with mental illness
  - Officers receive 40 hours training in how to handle crises
  - Forms collaborations between mental health professionals and the police
    - Officers are trained to identify situations where it is more appropriate to refer individuals to treatment services in the community rather than the criminal justice system

# Courts: Mental Health Courts

- Based on the drug court model; these are “problem solving courts”
- Based on concept of “**therapeutic jurisprudence**”
  - The court as a “therapeutic agent” in the lives of the defendant (Winick, 1997, p. 185).
- Check out this link for a [map of Mental Health Treatment Courts](#) in the US
  - There is a limited amount of research on the effectiveness of these courts, but the research that exists suggests that these courts have the ability to reduce recidivism (i.e., reoffending) and improve the lives of participants.

# Corrections: Mental Health Services

- Research suggests that the incarceration of mentally ill offenders costs the U.S. roughly \$9 billion each year
- At one point in time, because of deinstitutionalization, the 3 largest psychiatric facilities in the US were correctional facilities: LA county jail, Rikers Island, and Cook County jail (Adams & Ferrandino, 2008)
- Mental health services in correctional facilities
  - Needs and program assessments; service delivery