



· WINTER WEB CONFERENCE · JANUARY 27-28, 2021 ·

# Supporting People with Mental Illness

Libraries are community hubs. As such, librarians interact with many people in the community from different contexts and situations. People with mental illnesses, as well as their families and friends, seek resources at libraries. People may also come in seeking more immediate services





- Discuss general overview of major mental illnesses
- Learn how to engage someone who is in crisis
- Resources for caring for yourself and your co-workers





# Everyone has mental health

Mental health is the foundation for emotions, thinking, communication, learning, resilience and self-esteem. Mental health is also key to relationships, personal and emotional well-being and contributing to community or society.



# What is a mental illness?

refers collectively to all diagnosable mental disorders – health conditions involving

- Significant changes in thinking, emotion and/or behavior
- Distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities



# Most diagnosed mental disorders:

Depression

Anxiety

Bipolar Affective Disorder

Schizophrenia

Dementia



# YOU ARE NOT ALONE

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE**



1 in 5 adults in the U.S.  
experience mental illness

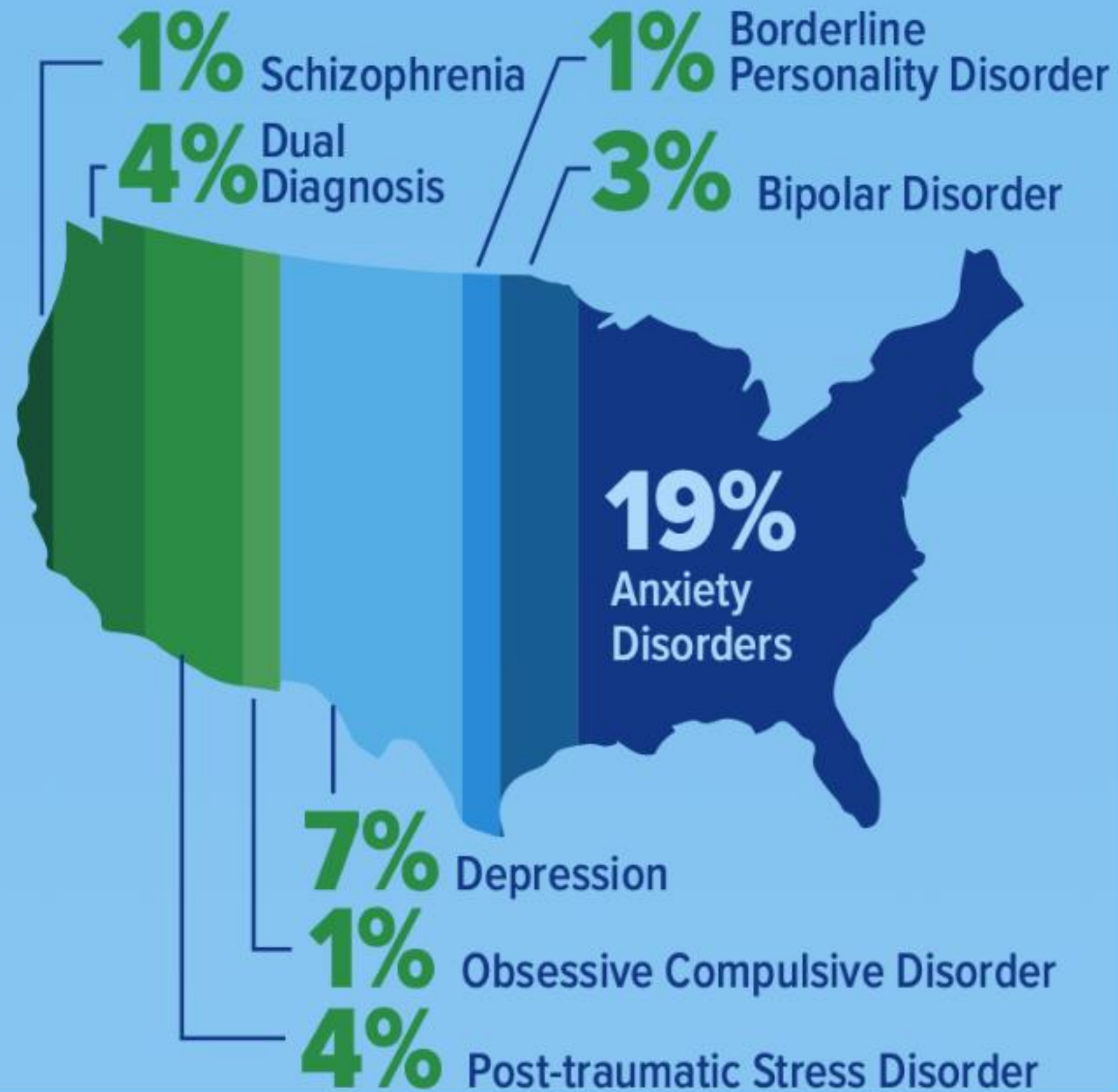


1 in 25 adults in  
the U.S. lives  
with a serious  
mental illness

**17%**  
of youth  
(6-17 years)  
experience a  
mental health  
disorder



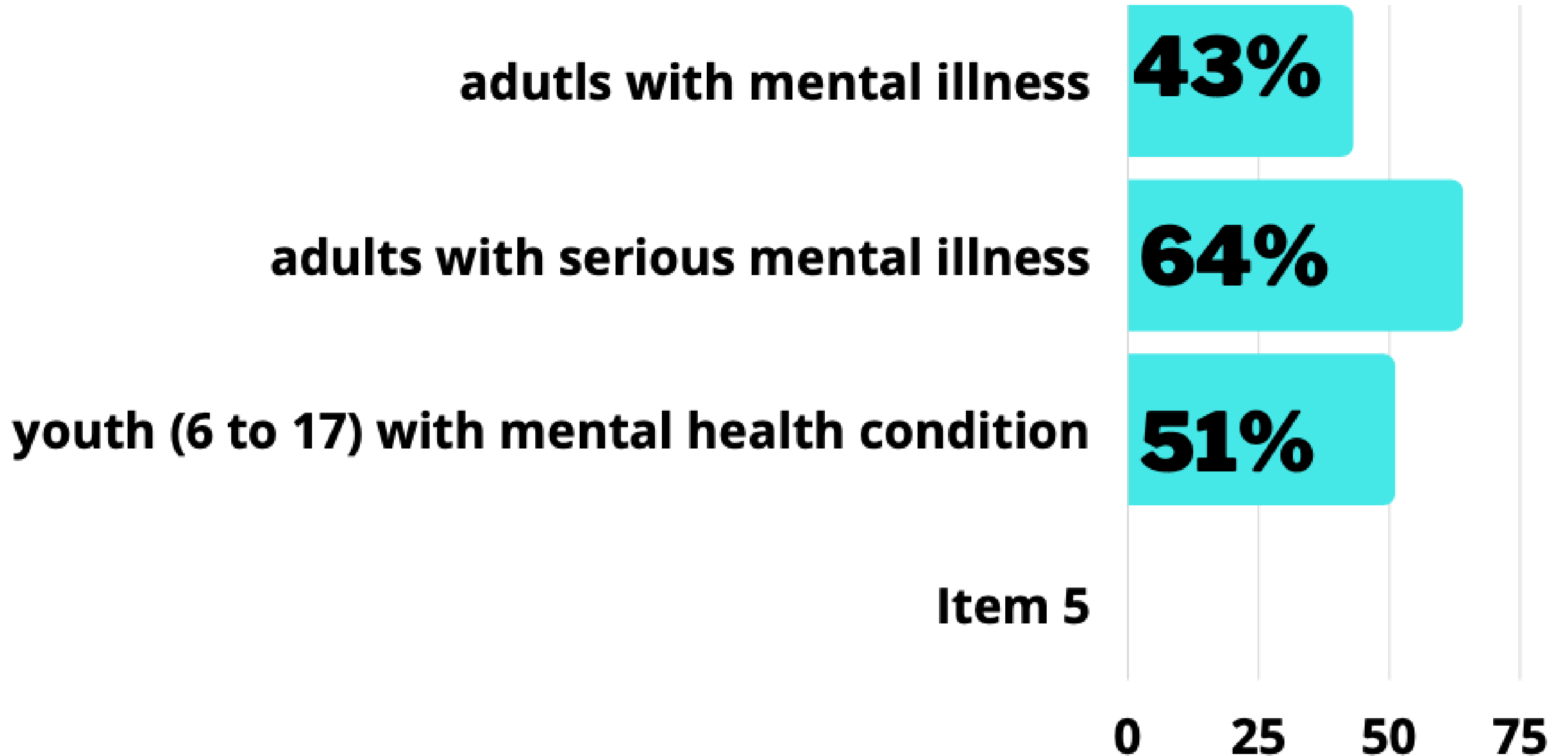
## 12 MONTH PREVALENCE OF COMMON MENTAL ILLNESSES (ALL U.S. ADULTS)



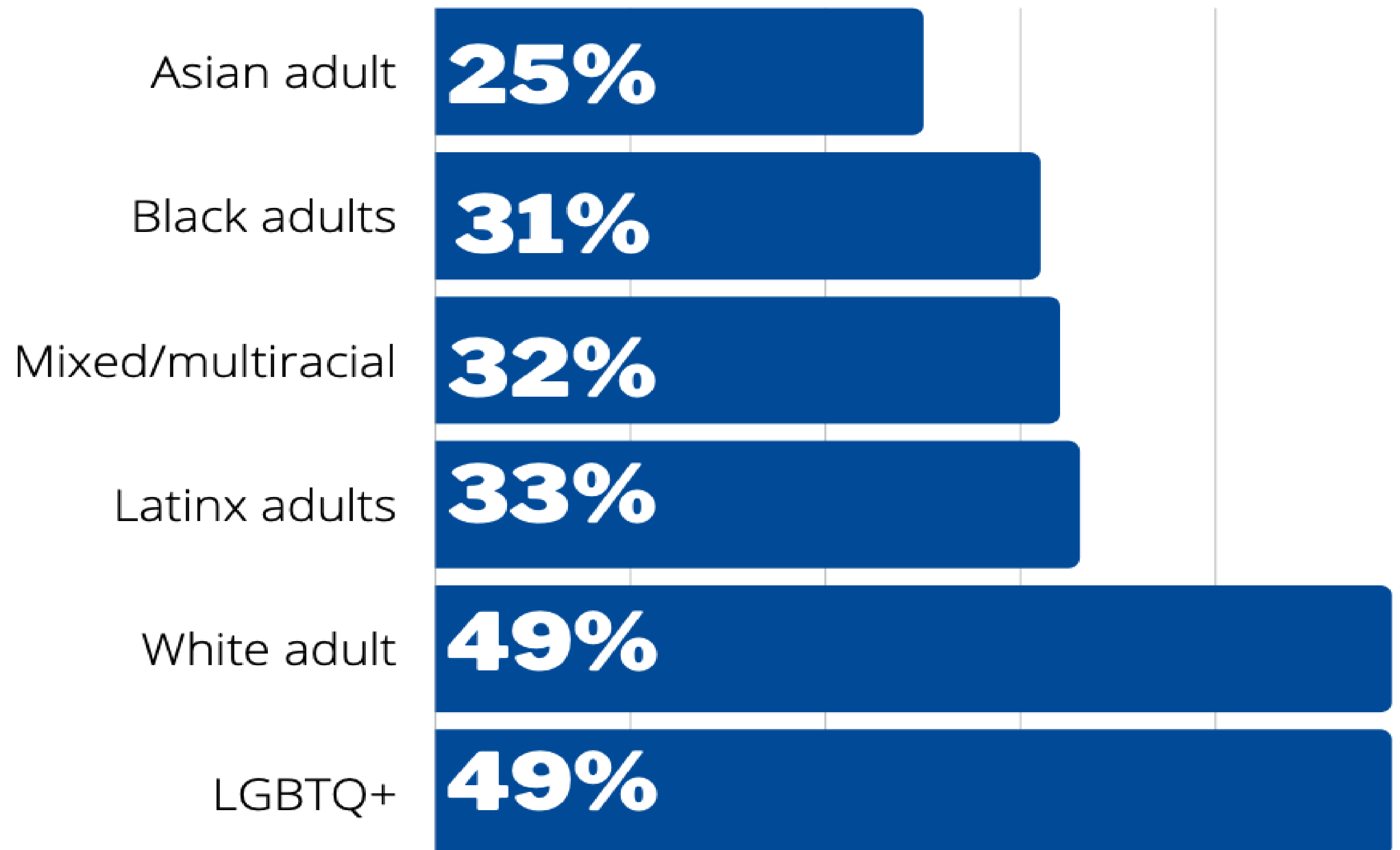


The average delay between  
symptom onset and treatment is  
**11 YEARS**

## People who get treatment in a given year







Adults with mental health diagnosis who  
received treatment or counseling in the past year

# Who is on the margins?



19% of U.S. adults with mental illness also have a substance abuse disorder



70% of youth in the juvenile justice system have at least one mental health condition



20% of people experiencing homelessness also have a serious mental illness



37% of people incarcerated in state and federal prison have a diagnosed mental condition



How to recognize what is going on

**You DON'T need to diagnose, just recognize and respond**



# Symptoms of mental illness: Mania/Schizophrenia

- Elevated mood
- Disordered speech/ talking very fast
- Exaggerated sense of well-being/ euphoria
- Distractibility
- Delusions
- Hallucinations
- Hearing voices





# What to do when engaging with someone having a mental illness episode:

## Is this a crisis?

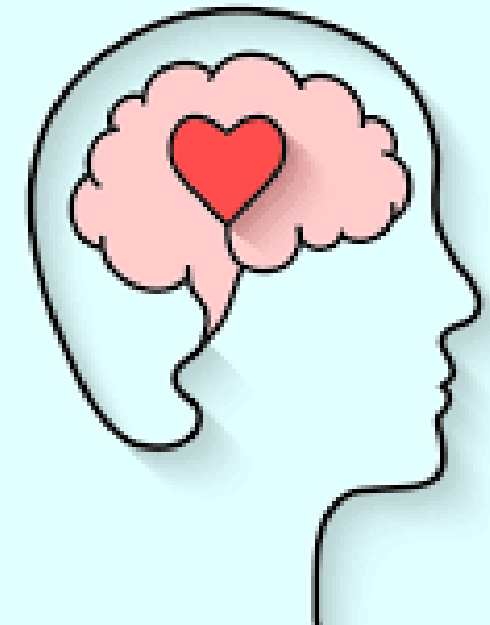
- speak in a low even tone
- ask simple questions: yes/no
- wait for the answer
- do NOT engage in the delusion or hallucination
- allow the person enough physical space, especially open space or near door
- minimize distractions
- try to sit down
- offer water



# Is this a crisis?

- Do all of the behaviors in previous slide  
**AND**
- ask if the voices they are hearing are telling them to hurt themselves/other
- ask if they want to kill themselves (this is OK - it will not put the idea into their head)
- can they respond to you even if unclearly? (for example - answer questions even if slowly)
- ask if they have a weapon (this does not mean they intend to use it)

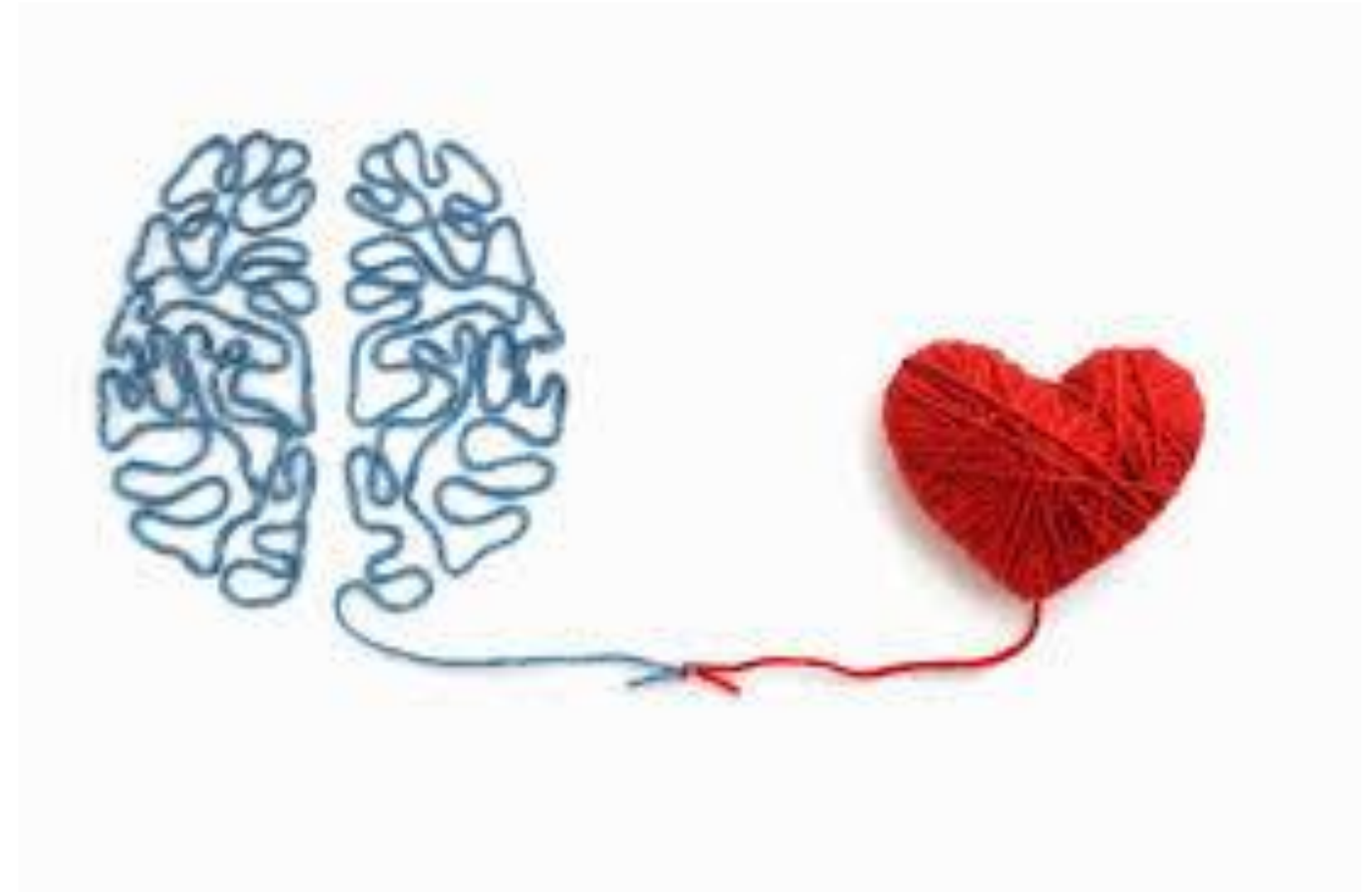
**If any of these are a concern to you, call 911**





# Examine policies and procedures

- Are you required to call 911, in what circumstances?
- Is the person safe to stay?
- Is the person's behavior disruptive or unusual?
- Is the person making people uncomfortable (is that wrong?)



# Symptoms of mental illness/how to help yourself and co-workers



## Early signs of mental illness:

- Lack of concentration
- Racing thoughts/ruminating
- Disheveled appearance
- Speaking fast
- Disorganized thoughts
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Crying for “seemingly no reason”
- Angry
- Disorganized





## Warning signs of suicide:

- Talking about dying or wanting to die
- Talking about feeling empty, hopeless, or no way out of problems
- Strong feelings of shame/guilt
- Social withdrawal and isolation
- Giving away personal items and tying up loose ends
- Saying goodbye

Suicide Hotline:

800-273-8255

## Let's talk about suicide:

It is good and important to talk about suicide. Addressing it clearly and with purpose can save a life.

- Most people talk about their suicide before they do it.
- Ask directly,
  - Do you want to kill yourself?
  - Do you have a plan?  
Do you have the means?
  - Do you have the opportunity?
- Tell them there is hope and help is on the way

**Call 911**



**Self-care is not about replacing bad feelings**



# To Cope or Not to Cope



- One doesn't think they are facing a "hard enough" life because they aren't experiencing direct trauma,
- One just needs to keep going with "general life"
- Maybe one is in current crisis
- Don't have time
- Don't value the long-term cost/benefit
- One is afraid or uncomfortable with negative emotions



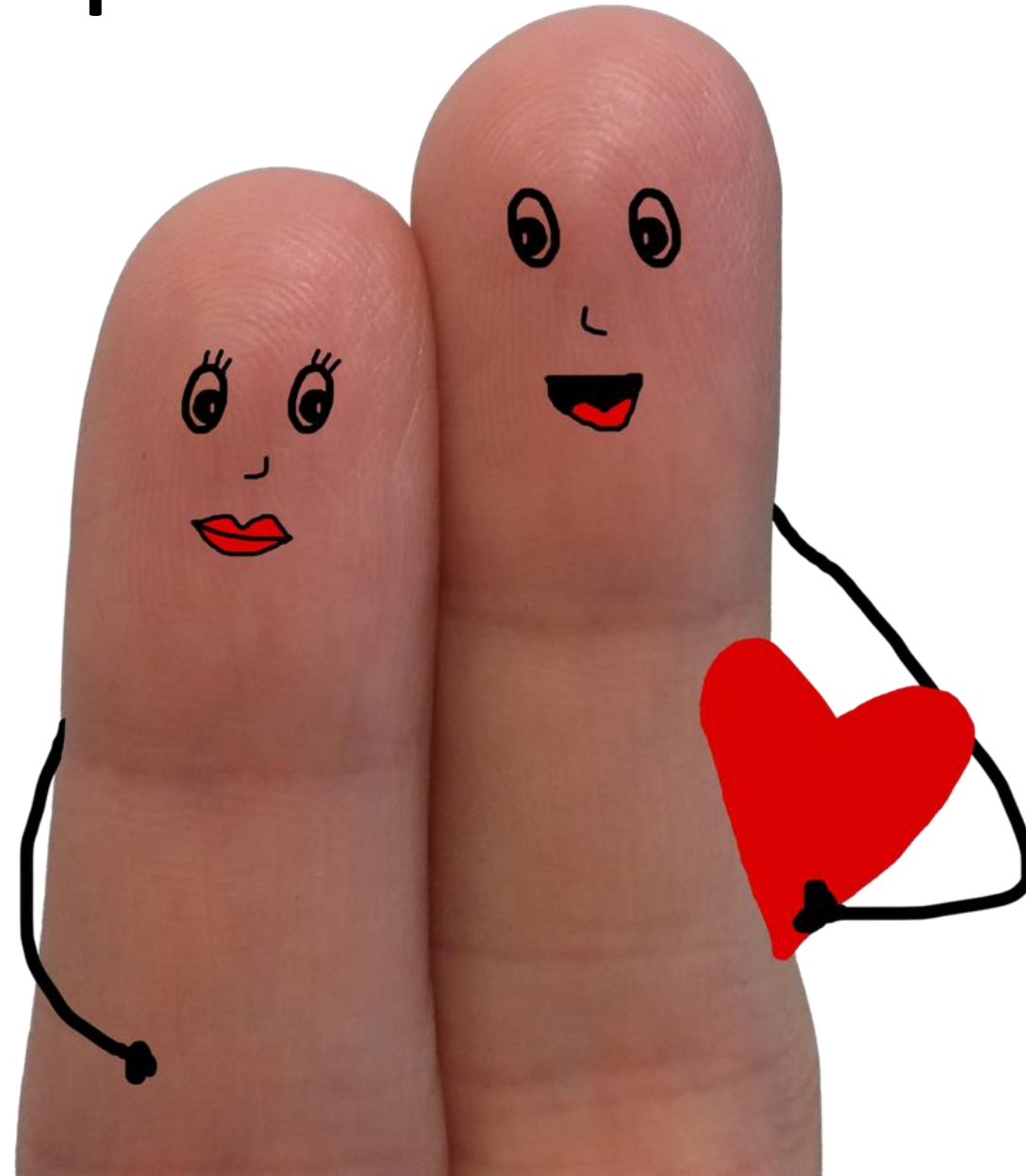
Negative coping skills- let's get these on the table.

Be honest with yourself.





**So what are coping skills and self-care options to maintain positive mental health?**



## **Thank you Espen Klausen: Two-prong rating**

- **When you are feeling negative emotions, it's ok. They don't define you.  
As part of self-care, you can learn to navigate them.**
- **Take a self-inventory – like a pain scale**
- **How big of a deal does it feel? There is no wrong answer: 1 – 10,**
- **How big of a deal is it? : 1 – 10. Contextualize it to yourself.  
When you felt a 10, is this that same feeling? Lower it or raise it accordingly.**
- **And I will add, When can you take care of it? Later: 1 – now: 10**



# Drink water

no, really, drink water



Questions and comments

Feel free to reach out to me at

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