



**health**

Department:  
Health  
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

# I am not my mental illness



## What is mental health?

*The World Health Organisation (WHO), describes mental health as “a state of well-being in which people realise their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and are able to make a contribution to their community.*

*It is an essential part of in thinking, mood or behaviour, which is out of keeping with cultural beliefs and norms. In most cases the symptoms are associated with distress and things that interfere with normal personal functions.*

## Signs of mental illness include

- \* emotional symptoms like feeling anxious, sad or scared
- \* cognitive symptoms like difficulty in thinking clearly and memory disturbance
- \* behavioural problems like aggression, inability to perform daily routine functions, excessive use of substances like pills, alcohol and other drugs and speaking to one self
- \* perceptual symptoms like hearing voices that other people do not hear and seeing things that other people do not see, as well as feeling touched by things that other people do not feel.

**Mental illness can be treated with medication or counselling.  
It is important to complete the prescribed treatment programme**