

# Definitions of Selected Mental Health Issues

**Addictive behaviors** any activity, substance, object, or behavior that has become the major focus of a person's life to the exclusion of other activities.

**Attention deficit / hyperactivity disorder** (ADHD) is a condition characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity.

**Autism or Asperger's** are conditions, present from early childhood, characterized by difficulty in communicating and forming relationships with other people and using language and abstract concepts.

**Bipolar disorder** is characterized by reoccurring episodes of mania and depression that cycle over time.

**Borderline personality disorder** (BPD) is characterized by impulsivity and instability in mood, self-image, and personal relationships.

**Chemical dependency** is an addiction to a mood- or mind-altering drug, such as alcohol or cocaine.

**Depression** is a condition characterized by depressed mood (sadness), poor concentration, insomnia, fatigue, appetite disturbances, excessive guilt and thoughts of suicide.

**Dual diagnosis or co-occurring** are terms used to describe people who have co-occurring mental illness and substance use disorders.

**Eating disorder** is any of a range of disorders characterized by abnormal or disturbed eating habits, such as anorexia or bulimia.

**Generalized anxiety disorder** (GAD) is characterized by severe, chronic, exaggerated worrying about everyday concerns.

**Obsessive compulsive disorder** (OCD) is a condition characterized by intrusive irrational thoughts that repeatedly appear in a person's mind and/or repetitive rituals that a person performs many times a day to momentarily relieve anxiety.

**Post traumatic stress** (PTS) is a response to a traumatic event characterized by nightmares or flashbacks, physical reactions to and avoidance of triggers associated with the trauma, exaggerated startle response, hyper-vigilance, sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating and outbursts of anger or irritability.

**Schizoaffective disorder** resembles Schizophrenia accompanied by an irregularity in mood.

**Schizophrenia** is a thought disorder characterized by hallucinations and delusions in addition to impairing a person's ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions and relate to others. Schizophrenia is subdivided into types that describe the symptoms: paranoid type, disorganized type, catatonic type, undifferentiated type.

**Self-harm** (SH) or **deliberate self-harm** (DSH) includes self-injury and self-poisoning and is defined as the intentional, direct injuring of body tissue most often done without suicidal intentions.

**Suicidal ideation** is thoughts about or a preoccupation with suicide, and which can range from a detailed plan to a fleeting consideration.