

# KEY MESSAGES

- Mental health is essential to everyone's overall health and well-being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable.
- People experience symptoms of mental illnesses differently—and some engage in potentially dangerous or risky behaviors to avoid or cover up symptoms of a potential mental health problem.
- Sometimes people—especially young people—struggling with mental health concerns develop habits and behaviors that increase the risk of developing or exacerbating mental illnesses, *or that could be signs of mental health problems themselves*.
- Activities like compulsive sex, recreational drug use, obsessive internet use, excessive spending, or disordered exercise patterns can all be behaviors that can disrupt someone's mental health and potentially lead them down a path towards crisis.
- It is important to understand early symptoms of mental illness and know when certain behaviors are potentially signs of something more.
- We need to speak up early and educate people about risky behavior and its connection to mental illness—and do so in a compassionate, judgement-free way.
- When we engage in prevention and early identification, we can help reduce the burden of mental illness by identifying symptoms and warning signs early—and provide effective treatment Before Stage 4.

Feel free to supplement these key messages with the assortment of statistics, quotes, and tips included in the fact sheets.