PREPARATION LIST

**Topic**: The prevalence of and stigma surrounding mental illness in the United States

**General Purpose**: To inform

**Specific Purpose**: To inform my audience about the prevalence of and stigma surrounding mental illness in the United States

**Thesis**: Even though the prevalence of diagnosed mental illness in the United States is significant, there remains stigma surrounding mental illness.

**Outline Organization of Main Points**: Cause-effect

INTRODUCTION

**[Attention getter]** Just recently, I received and watched my preordered copy of the 2012 movie, *To Write Love on Her Arms*. This movie details the story leading to the establishment of the non-profit foundation To Write Love on Her Arms by Jamie Tworkowski, a young man impacted by Renee Yohe. The movie describes Renee Yohe’s life – her diagnosis with bipolar disorder, the sexual abuse she endured, substance addiction to which she then turned, and her courageous return to friends and to professional help for rehabilitation and restoration ([Story: “To Write”](#)).
Audience connection: Consider these details within the movie: Renee’s bipolar medicine is referred to as “crazy pills. Renee’s mom screams, “Why is she cutting herself? What is wrong with her?” Her best friends abandon her due to her misunderstood actions. Her parents kick her out of the house because of her behavior...

Topic orientation step: The movie is littered with stereotypes and prejudices of mental illness.

Thesis: Today we are going to discuss the prevalence and stigma of mental illness. My thesis is that even though the prevalence of diagnosed mental illness in the United States is significant, there remains stigma surrounding mental illness.

Preview step: First, we will consider the prevalence of diagnosed mental illness in the United States, then we will investigate the matter of mental illness stigma, commonly held stigmas, and social relationships affected by mental illness stigma.

Transition: Jamie Tworkowski tells an audience at the end of the movie, “Renee’s story is not unique although she, herself, is unique.”

BODY

I. The prevalence of diagnosed mental illness in the United States is substantial.

   A. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, mental illness includes anxiety disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism spectrum disorders, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, depression, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia and social phobia.

   Fact: NIMH
B. **[Transparency #1, NIMH]** Any mental illness is prevalent in 18.6% of Americans according to the National Institute of Mental Health’s 2012 study, while 4.1% percent of Americans have serious mental illness.

1. Any mental illness (AMI) is defined as any mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder ranging from no to mild impairment to disabling impairment.
   i. AMI does not include substance use disorders.
   ii. 3.7 million adults were recorded with AMI in the past 12 months. **[Fact: NIMH]**

2. Serious mental illness narrows from any mental illness in that it is a mental, emotional or behavioral disorder (not including substance disorders) that substantially interferes or prevents major life activities (i.e. working or parenting).
   i. 9.6 million adults were recorded with SMI in the 12 months leading up to the study. **[Fact: NIMH]**

C. **Dr. Ronald Kessler**, Professor of Health Care at Harvard and an expert in large-scale mental health surveys estimates that these recorded numbers are too low.

1. Dr. Kessler thinks that the prevalence of any mental illness could range from 25% to 30% of Americans.

**[Transition]**: Because of the prevalence of mental illness, we might easily conclude that civilized people such as Americans accept and support those with mental illness… We may also be surprised by our findings.
II. Stigma of Mental Illness and Mental Health in the United States remains and may be increasing.

A. Mental Illness stigma may be two-fold consisting of public stigma, on which we will be focusing, and self-stigma.


   i. Those with mental illness should be feared and excluded from most communities.

   ii. Those with mental illness are irresponsible and must rely on others to make life decisions.

   iii. Those with mental illness are childlike and need caretakers.

2. Media analysis of film and print also identified three similar stigmas.

   i. The mentally ill are homicidal maniacs.

   ii. The mentally ill are childlike and have childlike perceptions of the world.

   iii. The mentally ill have a weak character, which is responsible for their illness.

3. Public stigma can take the form of withholding help, social avoidance, coercive treatment, and segregated institutions beyond held public opinion.

B. [Transparency #2: Pescosolido] Pescosolido surveyed the percentage of people in 2007 unwilling to move next door, make friends with, spend an evening socializing with, work closely with on the job, or marry into your family with the troubled, the depressed, the schizophrenic, the alcohol dependent, and the drug dependent.
1. This 2007 survey also identified the percentage of children and adolescents unwilling to have a classmate, spend an evening with family, move next door to, or make friends with peers who have asthma, “daily troubles,” attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and depression.

C. A 2010 study published in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* showed that between 1996 and 2006, Americans became more aware of the neurobiological basis for mental illness.

1. This study also identified that Americans became more supportive of treatment for mental illness during this time period.

2. This study also surveyed Americans’ stigma toward mental illness and found it to remain constant and in some instances to increase.

3. Pescosolido, head of the research, wrote “There was no support that greater scientific understanding translated into reduced prejudice in the United States or elsewhere.” [Quote: Pescosolido]

**CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, evidence shows that with the prevalence of mental illness at approximately 20% in the American population, mental illness stigma remains and may even be increased according to population surveys and media studies. As a society we must protest inhumane treatment, educate about the humanity of those with mental illness, and encourage repeated contact with the mentally ill in order that this stigma may be reduced in the future.

Commented [KM22]: a good example of how to lead into a journal title.

Commented [KM23]: The conclusion should “walk back” the opening. So make your main point (thesis) again—but don’t do it in a wooden or mechanical way.

Commented [KM24]: Then reconnect us (you,” “we,” “us” language) to the topic. And last, leave us with something memorable (a quote, a story, an example, a provocative question, a statistic, a fact, etc.).
Works Cited


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- The entries in your bibliography must be in proper MLA, APA, or Chicago editorial style.
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