

STATISTICS:

- ▶ 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- ▶ 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- ▶ 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- ▶ 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24

THE TRUTH ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND SECURITY CLEARANCE ELIGIBILITY:

Seeking mental health services does not affect an individual's ability to gain or hold their clearance eligibility. DCSA Consolidated Adjudication Services (CAS) Adjudicators will take into account individuals actively seeking the necessary mental health treatment as a positive step in the security clearance process.

Section 21 of the e-APP/SF86: Psychological and Emotional Health

"The U.S. government recognizes the critical importance of mental health and advocates proactive management of mental health conditions to support the wellness and recovery of Federal employees and others. Everyday individuals with mental health conditions carry out their duties without presenting a security risk. While most individuals with mental health conditions do not present security risks, there may be times when such a condition can affect a person's eligibility for a security clearance. Individuals experience a range of reactions to traumatic events. For example, the death of a loved one, divorce, major injury, service in a military combat environment, sexual assault, domestic violence, or other difficult work-related, family, personal, or medical issues may lead to grief, depression, or other responses. The government recognizes that mental health counseling and treatment may provide important support for those who have experienced such events, as well as for those with other mental health conditions. **Nothing in this questionnaire is intended to discourage those who might benefit from such treatment from seeking it.** Mental health treatment and counseling, in and of itself, **is not a reason to revoke or deny eligibility** for access to classified information or for holding a sensitive position, suitability or fitness to obtain or retain Federal or contract employment, or eligibility for physical or logical access to federally controlled facilities or information systems. Seeking or receiving mental health care for personal wellness and recovery may contribute favorably to decisions about your eligibility."

However, it is important for the cleared contractors and employees to know that there are no automatically disqualifying conditions or treatments. For individuals suffering from psychological conditions, seeking and participating in a treatment plan helps demonstrate integrity and trustworthiness and may contribute favorably to decisions about eligibility. Finally, avoiding necessary care, in contrast, can raise security concerns.

Reference:

- (n.d.). Mental Health Awareness Month. <https://www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Mental-Health-Awareness-Month>
- (n.d.). PERSONNEL VETTING WEBINAR. Mental Health Care and Your Security Clearance 20 JAN 2022. https://www.cdse.edu/Portals/124/Documents/webinars/DCSA_CDSE-Mental-Health-Care-Webinar.pdf

