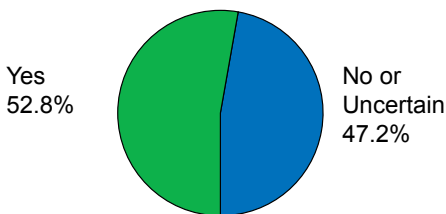


# What the Community Thinks about behavioral health issues

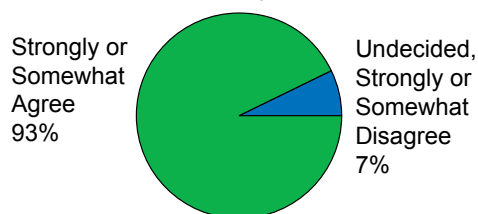
A randomized, statistically reliable telephone survey of adults in the six counties served by Northern Lakes CMH was conducted in December 2008 by Northwestern Michigan College Center for Business and Industry to measure community attitudes concerning mental health and disability issues. The timing was at the conclusion of our first two years of MDCH Anti-Stigma Block Grant activities, with a pre-survey conducted in December 2006. Our Anti-Stigma activities are designed consistent with national research which indicates that providing opportunities for community members to have positive, direct contacts with people with mental illness and developmental disabilities is the most effective way to reduce stigma. The survey indicates we continue to have a very supportive community, with slight gains and losses in the past two years in reducing stigma. It is hoped that over time our efforts will have a positive effect on community attitudes. i.e., the green slices below will become larger, and the blue slices will become smaller.

Whether someone personally knows anyone with a mental illness or developmental disability continues to be an important factor in the statistical likelihood of positive responses. People who personally know someone are more likely to be aware of Northern Lakes, support insurance parity, believe treatment works, and be supportive of people with disabilities; i.e., would not try to avoid a person with a disability, would rent to a person with a disability, do not believe people with mental illness are dangerous. They are also more likely to know who to call if they knew a child experiencing a mental health crisis, to have some post-high school education, be less than 66 years old, and be female. Likewise, people who say they do not personally know someone with a mental illness or developmental disability tend to be not at all aware of Northern Lakes, are more likely to subscribe to the societal stereotypes and prejudices surrounding mental illness and be more likely to discriminate against a person with a mental illness. They are also statistically more likely to have a high school/G.E.D education, be over 66 years old, and be male. Interestingly, some good news can be found in the verbatim comments made during the stigma questions of this latest survey. A recurring theme seems to indicate that people know more about mental health issues and, as such, are less willing to generalize about others who have disabilities. Many qualified their responses by saying their answers would be dependent upon the severity of the illness and if the person was receiving treatment.

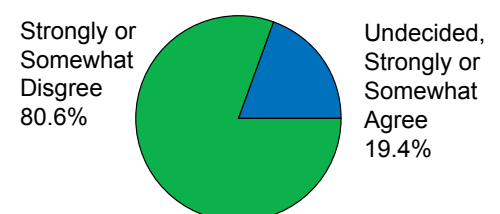
Do you personally know anyone who has received treatment for a mental illness or developmental disability?



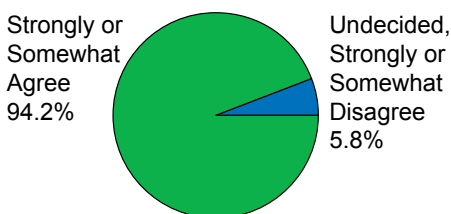
Health insurance plans should be required to provide equal coverage for people with mental illness and for those with physical illness.



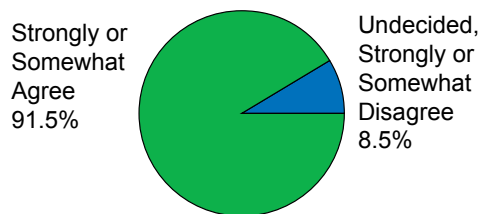
I would try to avoid a person with mental illness.



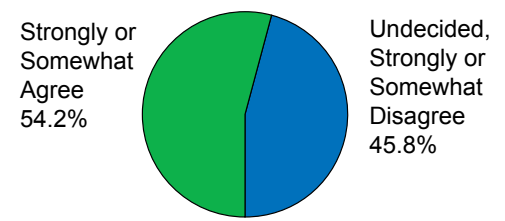
Medical and psychological treatments can help people with mental illness.



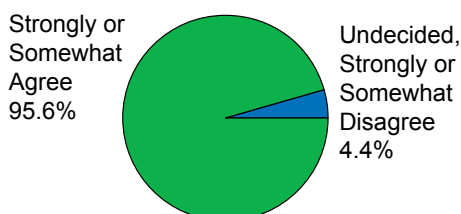
Treating people with a mental illness or developmental disability in their own community, instead of in an institution, is good.



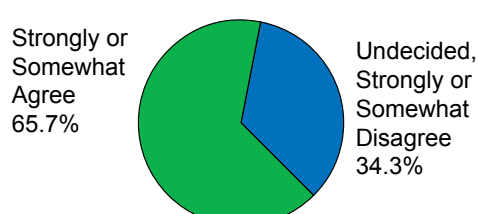
If I were a landlord, I would rent an apartment to a person with mental illness.



Children with serious emotional disturbance can be helped with treatment.



If I knew a child who was experiencing a mental health crisis, I would know who to call for assistance.



Persons with mental illness pose a risk to other people if they are not hospitalized.

