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Mentally Ill Definition:

A person who is incapable of managing his person or his affairs.

Related Terms: **Mental Disorder** [/LegalDictionary/M/MentalDisorder.aspx] , **Fool** [/LegalDictionary/F/Fool.aspx] , **Lunatic** [/LegalDictionary/L/Lunatic.aspx] , **Mentally Retarded** [/LegalDictionary/M/MentallyRetarded.aspx] , **Imbecile** [/LegalDictionary/I/Imbecile.aspx] , **Idiot** [/LegalDictionary/I/Idiot.aspx] , **Natural Fool** [/LegalDictionary/N/NaturalFool.aspx] , **Incapacitated** [/LegalDictionary/I/Incapacitated.aspx] , **Incompetency** [/LegalDictionary/I/Incompetency.aspx] , **Dementia** [/LegalDictionary/D/Dementia.aspx] , **Non Compos Mentis** [/LegalDictionary/N/NonComposMentis.aspx]

Terms referring to persons incapable of managing their person or their affairs have changed substantially with time as eventually, the stigma is attached and a new and more politically correct term evolves.

To *mentally ill* can be added mentally defective, **imbecile** [/LegalDictionary/I/Imbecile.aspx] , **lunatic** [/LegalDictionary/L/Lunatic.aspx] , **idiot** [/LegalDictionary/I/Idiot.aspx] , **mad**, **mentally retarded** [/LegalDictionary/M/MentallyRetarded.aspx] , **insane** [/LegalDictionary/I/Insanity.aspx] , **fool** [/LegalDictionary/F/Fool.aspx] and the **natural fool** [/LegalDictionary/N/NaturalFool.aspx] .

Mentally ill was defined in a 1959 English statute, the *Mental Health Act*, as follows:

"Mentally ill person means a person who owing to mental illness requires care, treatment or control for his own good or in the public interest, and is for the time being incapable of managing himself or his affairs and *mentally ill* has a corresponding meaning."

REFERENCES:

- Duhaime, Lloyd, [Duhaime's Legal Dictionary](#) [/LegalDictionary.aspx]
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