

MENTAL HEALTH

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INTRODUCTION :

Mental Health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community. In this positive sense, mental health is the foundation for individual well-being and the effective functioning of a community.

There are many views and opinions about mental illnesses, their causes, and how we can best treat and respond to these conditions. Mental health is one of many human values; it should not be regarded as the ultimate good in itself. Mental health is an individual and personal matter. It involves a living human organism or, more precisely, the condition of an individual human mind

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH ?

The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community". It was previously stated that there was no "official" definition of mental health. Cultural differences, subjective assessments, and competing professional theories all affect how "mental health" is defined.

Mental health is not the same thing as the absence of a mental illness. How we feel about ourselves, the world and our lives are all part of mental health. In reality, no one experiences perfect mental health or well-being all of the time (if ever!). We don't wait until we are sick before we begin to care about our physical health. In the same way, it doesn't make sense to wait until you are suffering from mental health problems before you begin to value your mental health.

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Over the course of your life, you may experience mental health problems. Your thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Life experiences, such as trauma or a history of abuse
- Biological factors, such as genes or chemical imbalances in your brain
- Family history of mental health problems

Taking care of one's mental health is just as important as taking care of one's physical health. Overall health includes a well-balanced and nutritious diet, regular exercise, stress management, early and ongoing mental health services when needed, and taking time to relax and enjoy family and friends. Finding a good balance between work and home is important to mental and physical health

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS :

People can experience different types of mental health problems. Some can occur for a short time, and some occur over an on-going time period. Just as other health conditions, these are real and diagnosable health conditions that affect and are affected by functioning of the brain, an organ of the body just like the kidney, liver, or heart. Mental health problems can affect your thinking, mood, and behavior. Feeling down, tense, angry or anxious are all normal emotions, but when these feelings persist for long periods of time, or if they begin to interfere with daily life, they may become mental health problems. Most mental health problems are not very severe or long-lasting. However, it is important to get support from your friends and family, and to ask for help early.

Common types can include :

Anxiety Disorders : People with anxiety disorders respond to certain objects or situations with fear and dread. Anxiety disorders can include obsessive-compulsive disorder, panic disorders, phobias, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder : Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is one of the most common childhood disorders and can continue through adolescence and adulthood. Symptoms include difficulty staying focused and paying attention, difficulty controlling behavior, and hyperactivity (over activity).

Eating Disorders : Eating disorders involve extreme emotions, attitudes, and behaviors involving weight and food. Eating disorders can include anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating.

Co-Occurring Mental and Substance Use Disorders : Mental illnesses and substance use disorders often occur together. Sometimes one disorder can be a contributing factor to or can exacerbate the other. Sometimes they simply occur at the same time.

Mood Disorders : These disorders involve persistent feelings of sadness or periods of feeling overly happy, or fluctuating between extreme happiness and extreme sadness. Mood disorders can include depression, bipolar disorder, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), and compulsion to self-harm.

Personality Disorders : People with personality disorders have extreme and inflexible personality traits that are distressing to the person and/or cause problems in work, school, or social relationships. Personality disorders can include antisocial personality disorder and borderline personality disorder.

Psychotic Disorders : People with psychotic disorders hear, see, and believe things that aren't real or true. An example of a psychotic disorder is schizophrenia.

Substance Use Disorders : Substance use disorders involve the dependence on or abuse of alcohol and/or drugs, including the nonmedical use of prescription drugs.

Suicidal Behavior: Suicide is a serious problem that causes immeasurable pain, suffering, and loss to individuals, families and communities nationwide. Millions of people consider, plan, or attempt suicide each year; many die as a result.

CAUSES OF MENTAL DISORDER :

The causes of mental disorders are generally complex and vary depending on the particular disorder and the individual. Although the causes of some mental disorders are unknown, it has been found that different Biological, Psychological, and Environmental Factors can all contribute to the development or progression of mental disorders. Most mental disorders are a result of a combination of several different factors rather than just a single factor.

These factors can include :

- Biological factors such as the genes inherited from your parents
Genetics are thought to account for 40% of a person's susceptibility to mental disorders while psychological and environmental factors account for the other 60%. Research has shown that many of these conditions are polygenic meaning there are multiple defective genes rather than only one that are responsible for a disorder. Even if a person inherits these abnormal genes it does not prove that the person will develop the illness. This is

where environmental and psychological factors come into play. Schizophrenia and Alzheimer's are both examples of hereditary mental disorders.

- Early life experiences such as abuse, neglect, or the loss of someone close to you.
- Individual factors such as your level of self-esteem, coping skills and thinking styles.
- Current circumstances, for example stress at school or work, money problems, difficult personal relationships, or problems within your family.

How an individual interacts with others as well as the quality of relationships can greatly increase or decrease a person's quality of living. Continuous fighting with friends and family can all lead to an increased risk of developing a mental illness.

Divorce is also another factor that can take a toll on both children and adults alike.

This is only a list of common and broad categories of factors responsible for mental illness as they range in wide area.

TREATMENTS FOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS :

Most people who experience mental illnesses will improve if they receive appropriate supports, services, and treatment. The 1st step to getting the right treatment is to see a health care professional and review your symptoms and life circumstances. Treatment options are tailored to each specific person and condition; however, the most common forms of treatment include :

- **Psychotherapy, or “talk therapy” (sometimes called counseling)** - teaches people strategies and gives them tools to deal with stress and uncomfortable thoughts and behaviors. Psychotherapy helps people manage their symptoms better and function at their best in everyday life.
- **Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT)** - helps people learn how to identify unhelpful thinking patterns, recognize and change inaccurate beliefs, relate to others in more positive ways, and change behaviors accordingly. CBT can be applied and adapted to treat many specific mental disorders.
- **Medications** - used to treat the symptoms of many mental disorders such as schizophrenia, depression, bipolar disorder (sometimes called manic-depressive illness), anxiety disorders, and attention deficit-hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Medications can also be used to manage the cravings and relapse associated with certain kinds of addictions. Sometimes medications are used with other treatments such as psychotherapy or counseling.
- **Rehabilitative services** - include recovery-focused activities or treatment/ therapeutic interventions such as assistance in improving or restoring daily living skills, social and

leisure skills, grooming and personal hygiene skills, and meal preparation skills; other support resources; and/or medication education.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO SUPPORT PEOPLE ?

Young people experience some of the highest prevalence rates of mental illness and yet have some of the lowest help seeking rates of any group. Additionally, childhood emotional and behavioral disorders are the most costly of all illnesses in children and youth.

Early Life Experiences: Early life experiences are important in shaping an individual's life into adulthood and can impact how an individual learns and responds to stressful events. We can arrange public awareness campaigns to deliver parents importance of providing healthy mental experiences to children during their childhood.

Schools Play an Important Role: Schools play a critical role in ensuring that behavioral problems are identified early so that young people can grow and thrive in a healthy environment. Schools can lead coordination efforts in bringing youth-serving agencies together to guarantee that children, youth, and families can easily access services that are community based, child centered, family focused, and culturally and linguistically competent.

Early Onset of Mental and Substance Use Disorders: Mental health problems often begin at an early age and become more significant during adolescence and young adulthood. Of children and youth in need of mental health services, 75-80 percent of these youth do not receive services.

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