Mental Illness- An Overview

Unchained Brain

According to the American Psychiatric association, mental illnesses are defined as mental health conditions involving changes in emotion, thinking or behavior (or a combination of these). They are often associated with distress and difficulty in functioning with respect to social, work, and family activities.

Nearly one in five U.S. adults experience some form of mental illness.

(American Psychiatric Association)

Mental Illness is treatable. The vast majority of people with mental illnesses continue to function in their daily lives. Like any medical problem, mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of.

Symptoms of Mental Illnesses

While every case is different, some common symptoms of several mental illnesses may include changes in diet or sleep patterns, distancing from people and activities, feeling numbness, feeling hopeless, having mood swings, or having thoughts of self harm.

Some Common Mental Illnesses

Persistent Depressive Disorder

A chronic type of depression which can interfere with daily life. People with this condition experience symptoms for at least two years. About 1.5 percent of American adults experience this condition each year.

Major Depressive Disorder

Causes feelings of extreme sadness or hopelessness that lasts for at least two weeks. This condition is also sometimes called clinical depression. Depending on the severity of symptoms, people with MDD may have suicidal ideation and may consider suicide

Generalized Anxiety Disorder

Causes a person to be consistently worried about many things, even with little or no reason to worry. People may feel nervous about getting through the day and their anxiety may keep them from accomplishing tasks.

Social Anxiety Disorder

Causes fear of social situations. People may become nervous about being around other people or feel they are being judged. This can make social gatherings and meeting new people difficult. Approximately 15 million U.S. adults experience this each year.

Bipolar Disorder

A chronic mental illness characterized by episodes of sometimes depressive lows and manic highs. Energy and thinking can be affected and mood swings may occur.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Causes repetitive and constant thoughts or obsessions. These thoughts happen with unreasonable and unnecessary desires to carry out certain behaviors, or compulsions. Many with OCD realize their thoughts are unreasonable but cannot stop them.

Schizophrenia

A serious condition that needs treatment. It impairs perception of reality and can interfere with connections to people. Schizophrenia can cause hallucinations, delusions, or hearing voices. If left untreated this can lead to dangerous situations.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder

A mental illness triggered after experiencing or witnessing a traumatic event. Possible examples could include war, natural disasters, or verbal/physical abuse. Symptoms may include flashbacks or intrusive thoughts about the situation.

Diagnosis

Diagnosis of mental illness is a multi-step process. Doctors may conduct physical exams and ask you to fill out a mental health questionnaire or undergo a psychological evaluation. You may be referred to a mental mental health expert.

Managing Symptoms

"**Coping Mechanisms**" are techniques and exercises used to manage mental illness. There are many options and everyone will be positively impacted by different strategies.

Emotion-Focused Coping Skills

Exercise | Take a bath | Give yourself a pep talk | Meditate

Problem-Focused Coping Skills

Work on managing time | Ask for support | Establish healthy boundaries | Create a to-do list

verywell

Treatment Options

Treatment for mental illness is not the same for everyone and doesn't offer a cure. it aims to reduce symptoms, address underlying causes, and help make the condition manageable. Approaches to treatment are often multi-faceted.

Some Options Include....

Most common are medications and therapy sessions but there is also hospital/residential treatments, and even some alternative home remedies.

Therapy

Therapy involves therapists listening to patients discuss their symptoms and thought processes, acting as a kind of sounding board or mediator. Therapists can also help patients identify unhealthy thought processes and effective coping mechanisms.

Medications

Medications fit into four main categories- antidepressants, anti-anxiety medications, antipsychotic medications, and mood-stabilizing medications

Finding the right treatment can be a long and ongoing process. It takes patience and dedication to finding a healthy and effective option. A good start to find the treatment is visiting lookupindiana.org/find-help/ to find local mental health professionals..

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We hope you found this resource helpful. If you would like to learn more about emotional intelligence here are sites we utilized, which have great information.

Sources Cited/Helpful Resources

- www.psychiatry.org
- www.healthline.com
- www.nami.org
- www.mentalhealth.gov
- www.nimh.nih.gov
- www.bringchange2mind.org
- www.verywellmind.com

These sites can all provide information about mental illness, coping mechanisms, treatment, and supporting others!

Unchained Brain is a mental health initiative focused on bringing accessible mental health education and awareness to the Fishers community. It was founded at Fishers High school with the hope of helping students and local residents alike.

If you'd like to learn more about our mission and see more of our educational content, visit our website and social media pages! We hope to see you there!

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