



Alliance

BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE

Mental Health Awareness

Understanding Mental Health Challenges

- A medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning
- Affect every aspect of life
- Can affect persons of any age, race, religion or income
- Not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing

Understanding Mental Health Challenges

- One in four adults in American experiences a mental health disorder in a given year
 - One in 17 lives with a serious mental health challenge such as schizophrenia, depression or bipolar disorder
- Half of the adults in America will develop a mental health challenge sometime in their lives
- One in 10 children lives with a serious mental or emotional disorder

Understanding Mental Health Challenges

- Symptoms of mental health challenges can appear as physical problems, such as abdominal pain, back pain or headache
- A thorough medical workup is important to understanding the cause and diagnosis of mental health challenges

Serious Mental Health Challenges

- Major depression
 - Mood state that goes well beyond temporarily feeling sad or blue
- Schizophrenia/schizo-affective disorder
 - Affects 2.4 million American adults
- Bipolar disorder
 - Chronic illness with recurring episodes of mania and depression

Serious Mental Health Challenges

- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
 - Obsessions are intrusive, irrational thoughts, unwanted ideas or impulses
- Anxiety/panic disorder
- Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
 - Affects many different people, from survivors of rape and natural disasters to military service men and women

Serious Mental Health Challenges

- Borderline personality disorder
 - Pervasive instability in moods, interpersonal relationships, self-image and behavior
- Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
 - Characterized by inattention, hyperactivity and impulsivity
- Dissociative Identity Disorder

Risk Factors

- Close blood relative with a mental health challenge
- Mother's exposure to viruses, toxins, drugs or alcohol during pregnancy
- Stressful life situations, such as financial problems, a loved one's death or a divorce
- Chronic medical condition, such as cancer
- Brain damage as a result of a serious injury

Risk Factors

- Traumatic experiences, such as military combat or being assaulted
- Use of illegal drugs
- Being abused or neglected as a child
- Lack of friends or healthy relationships
- Having a previous mental health challenge

Signs and Symptoms

- Feeling sad or down
- Confused thinking or reduced ability to concentrate
- Excessive fears or worries
- Extreme mood changes of highs and lows
- Withdrawal from friends and activities
- Significant tiredness, low energy or problems sleeping

Signs and Symptoms

- Delusions, paranoia or hallucinations
- Inability to cope with daily problems or stress
- Extreme feelings of guilt
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Major changes in eating habits
- Sex drive changes
- Excessive anger, hostility or violence
- Suicidal thinking

Complications of MH Challenges

- Unhappiness and decreased enjoyment of life
- Family conflicts
- Relationship difficulties
- Social isolation
- Problems with tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
- Problems at work or school

Complications of MH Challenges

- Poverty and homelessness
- Self-harm and harm to others, including suicide or homicide
- Increased risk of motor vehicle accidents
- Weakened immune system
- Heart disease and other medical conditions

Recovery from MH Challenges

- As people become familiar with their illness they recognize their own patterns of behavior
- A holistic process that involves a variety of perspectives
- Recovery journey is unique for each individual
- A process, not an event
- Requires community support and continuity of care

Recovery from MH Challenges

- Seek effective and timely care
 - Because mental health challenges have no cure, treatment may need to be continuous
- Treatment extends beyond medication
 - Includes attaining and maintaining physical health
- Individuals with a mental health challenges benefit tremendously from taking responsibility for their own recovery

Treatment of MH Challenges

- Medications available to help with challenges including psychosis, depression and anxiety
 - Usually effective but side effects should be monitored and minimized
- Treatment program should also include other essential components such as:
 - Psychotherapy
 - Support groups
 - Patient understanding of the challenge

What Can You Do?

- If you have any signs or symptoms of a mental health challenge, see your doctor, mental health provider or other health professional
- If your loved one shows signs of a mental health challenge, have an open and honest discussion with him or her about your concerns

The Treatment Team

- Family or primary care doctor
- Psychiatrist
- Psychotherapist, such as a psychologist or a licensed counselor
- Pharmacist
- Social worker
- Family members/peers

Questions for the Treatment Team

- What mental health challenge might I have?
- Why can't I get over it on my own?
- How do you treat my mental health challenge?
- Will counseling or psychotherapy help?
- Are there medications that might help?
- How long will treatment take?

Questions for the Treatment Team

- What can I do to help myself?
- Do you have any brochures or other printed material that I can have?
- What websites do you recommend?

Dealing with Suicidal Thoughts

- Call 911 or your local emergency number
- Call a suicide hotline number, such as (800) 273-TALK, to reach a trained counselor
- Reach out to a close friend or loved one or a minister or someone in your faith community
- Contact your doctor, other health care provider or mental health specialist

Living Well With MH Challenges

- Stick to your treatment plan
- Avoid alcohol and drug use
- Stay active
- Don't make important decisions when your symptoms are severe
- Prioritize your life
- Learn to adopt a positive attitude