

Mental Health

Authored by
mohammad looti

November 19, 2022

RECOMMENDED CITATION

mohammad looti (2022). *Mental Health*. PSYCHOLOGICAL SCALES. Retrieved from <https://scales.arabpsychology.com/?p=39230>

Mental health describes either a level of cognitive or emotional well-being or an absence of a mental disorder. From perspectives of the discipline of positive psychology or holism mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life and procure a balance between life activities and efforts to achieve psychological resilience. Mental health is an expression of emotions and signifies a successful adaptation to a range of demands.

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 one "official" definition of mental health. Cultural differences, subjective assessments, and competing professional theories all affect how "mental health" is defined. There are different types of mental health problems, some of which are common, such as depression and anxiety disorders, and some not so common, such as schizophrenia and Bipolar disorder.

Most recently, the field of Global Mental Health has emerged, which has been defined as 'the area of study, research and practice that places a priority on improving mental health and achieving equity in mental health for all people worldwide'.

History

In the mid-19th century, William Sweetzer was the first to clearly define the term "mental hygiene", which can be seen as the precursor to contemporary approaches to work on promoting positive mental health. Isaac Ray, one of thirteen founders of the American Psychiatric Association, further defined mental hygiene as an art to preserve the mind against incidents and influences which would inhibit or destroy its energy, quality or development.

An important figure to "mental hygiene", would be Dorothea Dix (1808-1887), a school teacher, who had campaigned her whole life in order to help those suffering of a mental illness, and to bring to light the deplorable conditions which they were put in. This was known as the "mental hygiene movement". Before this movement, it was not uncommon that people affected by mental illness in the 19th century would be considerably neglected, often left alone in deplorable conditions, barely even having sufficient clothing. Dix's efforts were so great that there was a rise in the number of patients in mental health facilities, which sadly resulted in these patients receiving less attention and care, as these institutions were largely understaffed.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Clifford Beers founded the National Committee for Mental Hygiene and opened the first outpatient mental health clinic in the United States of America.

Importance

The importance of maintaining a good mental health is crucial to living a long and healthy life. Mental health when good can enhance, when poor prevent, someone from living a normal life. According to Richards, Campania, & Muse-Burke (2010) "There is growing evidence that is showing emotional abilities are associated with prosocial behaviors such as stress management and physical health" (2010). It was also concluded in their research that people who lack emotional expression lead to misfit behaviors. These behaviors are a direct reflection of their mental health. Self-destructive acts may take place to suppress emotions. Some of these acts include drug and alcohol abuse, physical fights or vandalism. Also without emotional support, mental health is at risk. According to a study done by Strine, Chapman, Balluz and Mokdad, "Inadequate social and emotional support is a major barrier to health relevant to the practice of psychiatry and medicine, because it is associated with adverse health behaviors, dissatisfaction with life, and disability" (2008, p. 154). By receiving emotional support your health can increase and prevent mental health disorders. Support systems are a valuable asset and those whom do not have social and emotional support are more likely to lead to disorders. This support can lead to "an increase personal competence, perceived control, sense of stability, and recognition of self-worth and can have a positive effect on quality of life"(Strine, Chapman, Balluz & Mokdad, 2008).

Signs and Symptoms of Emotional Mental Disorder

There are several signs and symptoms that indicate a mental disorder. According to Hertel, Schütz, & Lammers " Some of the early symptoms of mental illness are related to emotional problems" (2009). People who cannot modulate or express normal emotions encountered in daily life, are faced with such deficits. A study done by Hertel, Schütz, & Lammers tested three mental disorders which are a direct reflection of emotional abilities. "Major depressive disorder, borderline personality disorder, and substance abuse disorder were all associated with significant deficits to emotional abilities" (Hertel, Schütz & Lammers, 2009). Many people who feel as if they cannot express their emotions turn to other things for a temporary fix to avoid dealing with their emotions. This temporary fix can lead to more severe problems, often resulting in making the emotional health issue more severe. This is becoming extremely common in our society. Recent evidence from the World Health Organization indicates, "mental illness affects nearly half the population worldwide" (Storrie, Ahern & Tuckett, 2010). Many of the people suffering from mental illness have issues functioning in everyday life. "Symptoms of mental illness and the associated stigma negatively affect people's self-esteem, disrupt relationships and limit the ability to obtain housing, jobs and an education" (Storrie, Ahern & Tuckett, 2010).

Perspectives

Mental well-being

Mental health can be seen as a continuum, where an individual's mental health may have many different possible values. Mental wellness is generally viewed as a positive attribute, such that a person can reach enhanced levels of mental health, even if the person does not have any diagnosed mental health condition. This definition of mental health highlights emotional well-being, the capacity to live a full and creative life, and the flexibility to deal with life's inevitable challenges. Many therapeutic systems and self-help books offer methods and philosophies espousing strategies and techniques vaunted as effective for further improving the mental wellness of otherwise healthy people. Positive psychology is increasingly prominent in mental health.

A holistic model of mental health generally includes concepts based upon anthropological, educational, psychological, religious and sociological perspectives, as well as theoretical perspectives from personality, social, clinical, health and developmental psychology.

An example of a wellness model includes one developed by Myers, Sweeney and Witmer. It includes five life tasks--essence or spirituality, work and leisure, friendship, love and self-direction--and twelve sub tasks--sense of worth, sense of control, realistic beliefs, emotional awareness and coping, problem solving and creativity, sense of humor, nutrition, exercise, self care, stress management, gender identity, and cultural identity--which are identified as characteristics of healthy functioning and a major component of wellness. The components provide a means of responding to the circumstances of life in a manner that promotes healthy functioning. The population of the USA in its' majority is considered to be mostly uneducated on the subjects of mental health.

Lack of a mental disorder

Mental health can also be defined as an absence of a major mental health condition (for example, a condition diagnosed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders for the U.S.A or the fifth chapter of the International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems ICD-10 Chapter V: Mental and behavioural disorders used in countries of the world other than the U.S.A) though recent evidence stemming from positive psychology (see above) suggests mental health is more than the mere absence of a mental disorder or illness. Quite simply, mental health refers to a persons health of the mind. Therefore the impact of social, cultural, physical and education can all affect someone's mental health.

Cultural and religious considerations

Mental health is a socially constructed and socially defined concept; that is, different societies, groups, cultures, institutions and professions have very different ways of conceptualizing its nature and causes, determining what is mentally healthy, and deciding what interventions, if any, are appropriate. Thus, different professionals will have different cultural, class, political and religious

backgrounds, which will impact the methodology applied during treatment.

Research has shown that there is stigma attached to mental illness. In the United Kingdom, the Royal College of Psychiatrists organized the campaign Changing Minds (1998-2003) to help reduce stigma.

Many mental health professionals are beginning to, or already understand, the importance of competency in religious diversity and spirituality. The American Psychological Association explicitly states that religion must be respected. Education in spiritual and religious matters is also required by the American Psychiatric Association.

Emotional Mental Health in the United States of America

According to the World Health Organization in 2004, depression is the leading cause of disability in the United States of America for individuals ages 15 to 44 (Thomson, 2007). Absence from work in the U.S. due to depression is estimated to be in excess of \$31 billion dollars per year (Thomson, 2007). Depression frequently co-occurs with a variety of medical illnesses such as heart disease, cancer, and chronic pain and is associated with poorer health status and prognosis (Munce, 2007; Blumenthal et al., 2007, Moussavi, 2007). Each year, roughly 30,000 Americans take their lives, while hundreds of thousands make suicide attempts (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). In 2004, suicide was the 11th leading cause of death in the United States of America (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), third among individuals ages 15-24 (Thomson, 2007). Despite the increasingly availability of effectual depression treatment, the level of unmet need for treatment remains high (Thomson, 2007). Reducing depression within the U.S. population has been an essential priority of governmental organizations over the last decade. Mental illness, disability, and suicide are ultimately the result of a combination of biology, environment, and access to and utilization of mental health treatment (Thomson, 2007). Public health policies can influence access and utilization, which subsequently may improve mental health and help to progress the negative consequences of depression and its associated disability (Thomson, 2007). Emotional mental illnesses should be a particular concern in the United States of America since the U.S.A has the highest annual prevalence rates (26 percent) for mental illnesses among a comparison of 14 developing and developed countries (Demyttenaere et al, 2004). While approximately 80 percent of all people in the United States with a mental disorder eventually receive some form of treatment, on the average persons do not access care until nearly a decade following the development of their illness, and less than one-third of people who seek help receive minimally adequate care. Research conducted by Mental Health America found the following factors to be considerably allied with improved depression status and lower suicide rates . "Mental health resources -- On average, the higher the number of psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers per capita in a state, the lower the suicide rate. Barriers to treatment -- The lower the percentage of the population reporting that they could not obtain healthcare because of costs, the lower the suicide rate and the better the

state's depression status. In addition, the lower the percentage of the population that reported unmet mental healthcare needs, the better the state's depression status. Mental health treatment utilization -- holding the baseline level of depression in the state constant, the higher the number of antidepressant prescriptions per capita in the state, the lower the suicide rate. Socioeconomic characteristics -- The more educated the population and the greater the percentage with health insurance, the lower the suicide rate. The more educated the population, the better the state's depression status. Mental health policy -- The more generous a state's mental health parity coverage, the greater the number of people in the population that receive mental health services (Thomson, 2007)."

Emotional Mental Health Issues Across The World

Emotional mental disorders are a leading cause of disabilities worldwide. Investigating the degree and severity of untreated emotional mental disorders throughout the world is a top priority of the World Mental Health (WMH) survey initiative, which was created in 1998 by the World Health Organization (WHO). "Neuropsychiatric disorders are the leading causes of disability worldwide, accounting for 37% of all healthy life years lost through disease." (Thornicroft, 2007). These disorders are most destructive to low and middle-income countries due to their inability to provide their citizens with proper aid. Despite modern treatment and rehabilitation for emotional mental health disorders, "even economically advantaged societies have competing priorities and budgetary constraints" (Thornicroft, 2007). The World Mental Health survey initiative has suggested a plan for countries to redesign their mental health care systems to best allocate resources. "A first step is documentation of services being used and the extent and nature of unmet needs for treatment. A second step could be to do a cross-national comparison of service use and unmet needs in countries with different mental health care systems. Such comparisons can help to uncover optimum financing, national policies, and delivery systems for mental health care." (Thornicroft, 2007). Knowledge of how to provide effective emotional mental health care has become imperative worldwide. Unfortunately, most countries have insufficient data to guide decisions, absent or competing visions for resources, and near constant pressures to cut insurance and entitlements."(Thornicroft, 2007). WMH surveys were done in Africa (Nigeria, South Africa), the Americas (Colombia, Mexico, U.S.A), Asia and the Pacific (Japan, New Zealand, Beijing and Shanghai in the Peoples Republic of China), Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Ukraine), and the middle east (Israel, Lebanon). Countries were classified with World Bank criteria as low-income (Nigeria), lower middle-income (China, Columbia, South Africa, Ukraine), higher middle-income (Lebanon, Mexico), and high-income (all others) (Thornicroft, 2007). The coordinated surveys on emotional mental health disorders, their severity, and treats were implemented in afore mentioned countries. These surveys assessed the frequency, types, and adequacy of mental health service use in 17 countries in which WMH surveys are complete. The WMH also examined unmet needs for treatment in strata defined by the seriousness of mental

disorders. (Thornicroft, 2007). Their research showed that "the number of respondents using any 12- month mental health service was generally lower in developing than in developed countries, and the proportion receiving services tended to correspond to countries' percentages of gross domestic product spent on health care" (Thornicroft, 2007). "High levels of unmet need worldwide are not surprising, since WHO Project ATLAS' findings of much lower mental health expenditures than was suggested by the magnitude of burdens from mental illnesses. Generally, unmet needs in low-income and middle-income countries might be attributable to these nations spending reduced amounts (usually

ARABPSYCHOLOGY.COM