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22. Mental Health Problem Symptoms, Causes and Healthy Lifestyle

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Mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness. It includes how you feel about yourself and how you adjust to life events. However, the National Mental Health Association lists 10 characteristics of people who are mentally healthy.

1. They feel good about themselves.
2. They do not become overwhelmed by emotions, such as fear, anger, love, jealousy, guilt, or anxiety.
3. They have lasting and satisfying personal relationships.
4. They feel comfortable with other people.
5. They can laugh at themselves and with others.
6. They have respect for themselves and for others even if there are differences.
7. They are able to accept life's disappointments.
8. They can meet life's demands and handle their problems when they arise.
9. They make their own decisions.
10. They shape their environment whenever possible and adjust to it when necessary.

Mental health problems can cover a broad range of disorders, but the common characteristic is that, they all affect the affected person's personality, thought processes or social interactions. They can be difficult to clearly diagnose, unlike physical illnesses. According to data from SAMHSA, 20 percent of people in America suffer from a form of mental disorder, and 5 percent suffer from a disorder severe enough to affect school, work, or other aspects of daily life.

What Are the Types of Mental Health Disorders?

Mental health disorders occur in a variety of forms, and symptoms can overlap, making disorders hard to diagnose. However, there are some common disorders that affect people of all ages.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is characterized by an inability to remain focused on task, impulsive behavior, and excessive activity or an inability to sit still. Although this disorder is most commonly diagnosed in children, it can occur in adults as well.

Anxiety/Panic Disorder

Anxiety disorder is defined by intermittent and repeated attacks of intense fear of something bad happening or a sense of impending doom.

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar disorder causes a periodic cycling of emotional state between manic and depressive phases. Manic phases contain periods of extreme activity and heightened emotions.

Depression

Depression covers a wide range of conditions, typically defined by a persistent bad mood and lack of interest in pursuing daily life, as well as bouts of lethargy and fatigue. Dysthymia is a milder but longer-lasting form of depression.

Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia is not, as commonly thought, solely about hearing voices or having multiple personalities. Instead, it is defined by a lack of ability to distinguish reality. Schizophrenia can cause paranoia and belief in elaborate conspiracies.

What Causes a Mental Health Disorder?

There is no single cause for mental health disorders; instead, they can be caused by a mixture of biological, psychological and environmental factors. People who have a family history of mental health disorders may be more prone to developing one at some point. Changes in brain chemistry from substance abuse or changes in diet can also cause mental disorders. Psychological factors and environmental factors such as upbringing and social exposure can form the foundations for harmful thought patterns associated with mental disorders. Only a certified mental health professional can provide an accurate diagnosis of the causes of a given disorder.

What Are the Signs of a Mental Health Disorder?

Mental health disorders exist in broad categories: anxiety disorders, mood disorders, psychotic disorders, personality disorders and impulse control disorders. If someone you know experiences erratic thought patterns, unexplained changes in mood, lack of interest in socializing, lack of empathy, inability to tell the difference between reality and fantasy, or a seeming lack of control, that person may have a mental health disorder. This is, by no means, a complete list of symptoms.

Emotional Symptoms of Mental Health Problems

Mental health problems can cause a wide variety of emotional symptoms, some of which include:

- Changes in mood
- Erratic thinking
- Chronic anxiety
- Exaggerated sense of self-worth
- Impulsive actions

Physical Symptoms of Mental Health Problems

Mental health problems typically do not cause physical symptoms in and of themselves. Depression, however, can indirectly cause weight loss, fatigue and loss of libido, among others. Eating disorders, a separate class of mental health disorders, can cause malnutrition, weight loss, amenorrhea in women, or electrolyte imbalances caused by self-induced vomiting. This makes eating disorders among the most deadly of mental health disorders.

Short-Term and Long-Term Effects of Mental Health Instability

In the short-term, mental health problems can cause people to be alienated from their peers because of perceived unattractive personality traits or behaviors. They can also cause anger, fear, sadness and feelings of helplessness if the person does not know or understand what is happening. In the long-term, mental health disorders can drive a person to commit suicide. According to the National Institute for Mental Health, over 90 percent of suicides have depression or another mental disorder as factors.

Depression and Mental Health

Depression often coexists with other mental disorders, or certain disorders may have caused depression in the first place. For example, 40 percent of people with post-traumatic stress disorder also have depression.

Getting Help for a Mental Health Issue

It's important that you or your loved one should seek help to treat mental health issue. First, a physical checkup can rule out physical illnesses. An appointment with a mental health professional will usually include an interview and subsequent evaluation to determine the most obvious symptoms and to ascertain the type and severity of mental disorder. In certain cases, an intervention may be required from family and friends

Healthy Lifestyle

The simple innocent choice of not exercising has shown, in studies, to promote 10 serious health conditions you don't ever want to develop. The bottom line is physical inactivity has a lot of unhealthy implications even at our bodies cellular level. At the cellular level, inactivity decreases the ability to transfer oxygen from your blood stream to your cells, and also decreases the number of power activating mitochondria. However, the worst cost of not exercising or being physically active can result in the following 10 devastating conditions:

1. **CANCER** - Studies have shown that fitness enthusiastic men and women who are physically active have a 30 to 40 percent lower risk of colon cancer compared to individuals who are inactive.
2. **DIABETES** - Studies show lack of regular physical exercise increases insulin sensitivity. Diabetes is considered the "sedentary disease" which is striking people at an alarming rate. If it is not controlled, it can destroy the body's organs.
3. **HEART** - Lack of consistent physical activity, over time, decreases the function of the heart muscle, affects the blood vessels, including the large aortic artery to the veins and small capillaries. According to many studies, scientists have good reason to believe that regular exercise protects the heart.
4. **STROKE** - Regular exercisers are 25% less likely to have a stroke than their sedentary counterparts. Being fit lowers blood pressure, raises HDL cholesterol, and reduces the risk of blood clots.
5. **BRAIN** - People, who are physically active, according to solid evidence, are at lower risk for cognitive decline and dementia.
6. **MUSCLES** - If you don't exercise on a regular basis, you are at risk of losing some 6 percent of your muscles mass every decade of life from the age of 30 on. This also translates into a 10 - 15 percent loss of strength per decade. Once again, if you don't use the muscle, you will lose the muscle quickly.
7. **OSTEOPOROSIS** - Fragile bones cause more than 1.5 million fractures each year in the U.S. Bone is like muscle, if you stress it, it responds. If you don't, you gradually lose its strength, and increase your chances of breaking them. Regular weekly strength training can help prevent osteoporosis, and decrease your chances of breaking a bone.
8. **MENTAL HEALTH** - People who don't exercise on a regular basis are more prone to develop depression. According to a recent study, people who were more active were nearly 20 percent less likely to be diagnosed with depression over the next five years than less active people. Fitness

conscious individuals also generally display an improved self esteem, or self image.

9. WEIGHT - If you are inactive, year in and year out, you will eventually gain weight and lose fitness which increases the chance of a heart attacks, and diabetes.

10. IMMUNE SYSTEM - Moderate amounts of exercise reduces the risk of upper respiratory infection. Regular exercise may boost immune function.

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