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Unit -I

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Introduction to Mental Health (Unit I)



What is Health?

- Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of human life.

TYPES OF HEALTH

- 1. Physical Health: The state of being free from physical disease or pain.
- 2. Mental Health: A state of wellbeing in which an individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.
- 3. Social Health: The ability to form and maintain healthy relationships with others.
- 4. Emotional Health: The ability to recognize and manage one's emotions and to have a positive outlook on life.
- 5. Spiritual Health: A sense of connection to something greater than oneself, which can provide meaning, purpose, and direction in life.



Determinants of Health

1. Genetics: An individual's genetic makeup can affect their health.
2. Environment: Environmental factors, such as air and water quality, can impact health.
3. Lifestyle: An individual's lifestyle choices, such as diet and physical activity, can affect their health.
4. Social and Economic Factors: Social and economic factors, such as education and income, can impact health.
5. Healthcare: Access to quality healthcare can impact health outcomes.



Importance of Health

- 1. Quality of Life:** Good health enables individuals to live a full and meaningful life.
- 2. Productivity:** Good health enables individuals to be productive and contribute to society.
- 3. Happiness:** Good health is linked to happiness and overall wellbeing.
- 4. Social Connections:** Good health enables individuals to form and maintain social connections.
- 5. Longevity:** Good health is linked to longevity and a longer lifespan.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A MENTALLY HEALTHY PERSON

Emotional Characteristics

1. Emotional Awareness: Recognizes and understands their emotions.
2. Emotional Regulation: Manages emotions effectively, without excessive mood swings.
3. Resilience: Can bounce back from adversity and trauma.
4. Optimism: Has a positive outlook on life, with a sense of hope and enthusiasm.

Cognitive Characteristics

1. Clear Thinking: Thinks clearly and logically, without excessive confusion or disorganization.
2. Problem-Solving: Can approach problems in a logical and systematic way.
3. Realistic Perception: Has a realistic view of themselves, others, and the world.
3. Flexibility: Can adapt to changing situations and circumstances.

Behavioural Characteristics

1. Healthy Habits: Engages in regular exercise, healthy eating, and adequate sleep.
2. Social Connections: Maintains healthy relationships with family, friends, and community.
3. Leisure Activities: Engages in enjoyable hobbies and leisure activities.
4. Responsibility: Takes responsibility for their actions, decisions, and life.

Interpersonal Characteristics

1. **Empathy:** Can understand and appreciate the feelings and perspectives of others.
2. **Effective Communication:** Communicates clearly and assertively, without excessive aggression or passivity.
3. **Boundary Setting:** Establishes and maintains healthy boundaries with others.
4. **Conflict Resolution:** Can resolve conflicts in a constructive and respectful manner.

Spiritual Characteristics

1. **Sense of Purpose:** Has a clear sense of purpose and meaning in life.
2. **Values and Principles:** Lives in accordance with their values and principles.
3. **Connection to Something Greater:** Feels connected to something greater than themselves, such as nature, a higher power, or a community.
4. **Gratitude and Appreciation:** Practices gratitude and appreciation for life's experiences and relationships.

MENTAL ILLNESS

Mental Illness: A broad term used to describe a variety of mental health conditions that affect a person's mood, thinking, behavior, and overall well-being.



SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of mental illness depend on the specific condition but often include:

Emotional Symptoms:

- Persistent sadness, anxiety, or irritability.
- Feelings of hopelessness, guilt, or worthlessness.

Cognitive Symptoms:

- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide.
- Distorted thinking or delusions.

Behavioral Symptoms:

- Withdrawal from friends and activities.
- Changes in appetite or sleep patterns.
- Unexplained anger or aggression.

Physical Symptoms:

- Fatigue or low energy.
- Unexplained physical aches or pains.
- Changes in motor activity (restlessness or slowed movements).

COMMON CAUSES

Mental illnesses are typically caused by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors:

1. Biological Causes:

1. **Genetics:** Family history of mental health conditions.
2. **Brain Chemistry:** Imbalance in neurotransmitters.
3. **Injury or Illness:** Traumatic brain injury or chronic illnesses.

2. Psychological Causes:

1. Trauma, abuse, or neglect during childhood.
2. Chronic stress or unresolved grief.
3. Low self-esteem or unhealthy coping mechanisms.

3. Social and Environmental Causes:

1. Social isolation or lack of support systems.
2. Socioeconomic stressors (poverty, unemployment).
3. Substance abuse or exposure to violence.

4. Environmental Triggers:

1. Exposure to toxins or infections during pregnancy.
2. Life-changing events, such as divorce or loss of a loved one.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

While not all mental illnesses can be prevented, the following strategies can reduce the risk and promote mental well-being:

1. Build Resilience:

1. Develop positive coping mechanisms for stress.
2. Cultivate self-awareness and emotional regulation.

2. Promote a Healthy Lifestyle:

1. Maintain a balanced diet and regular exercise.
2. Ensure sufficient sleep and hydration.

3. Social Support:

1. Foster strong connections with family and friends.
2. Seek community support groups or therapy if needed.

4. Educate and Raise Awareness:

1. Increase mental health literacy to reduce stigma.
2. Train individuals in recognizing early warning signs.

5. Access to Professional Help:

1. Regular mental health check-ups.
2. Timely intervention with therapy or medication when needed.

6. Stress Management:

1. Practice mindfulness, meditation, or relaxation techniques.
2. Avoid overloading yourself

MENTAL DISORDER

A clinically significant disturbance in an individual's cognition, emotional regulation, or behavior that reflects a dysfunction in psychological, biological, or developmental processes.

In essence, both terms are often used interchangeably, though "mental disorder" is more clinical.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of mental disorders vary depending on the type but often include a combination of:

Emotional Symptoms:

- Persistent sadness or anxiety.
- Intense mood swings or irritability.
- Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness.

Cognitive Symptoms:

- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Intrusive thoughts or obsessions.
- Delusions or hallucinations (in some disorders).

Behavioral Symptoms:

- Withdrawal from social activities.
- Risky or self-destructive behaviors.
- Changes in eating or sleeping patterns.

Physical Symptoms:

- Chronic fatigue or low energy.
- Unexplained physical pain or discomfort.
- Altered motor activity (e.g., restlessness or sluggishness).

Common Causes

Mental disorders arise from complex interactions among biological, psychological, and social factors:

1. Biological Causes:

- Genetic predisposition or family history.
- Neurochemical imbalances in the brain (e.g., serotonin, dopamine).
- Brain injury, infections, or chronic medical conditions.

2. Psychological Causes:

- Trauma, neglect, or abuse (especially during childhood).
- Chronic stress or unresolved emotional conflicts.
- Personality traits like perfectionism or dependency.

3. Social and Environmental Causes:

- Social isolation or lack of support networks.
- Financial struggles, job loss, or poverty.
- Exposure to violence, substance abuse, or discrimination.

4. Environmental Triggers:

- Major life changes, such as divorce or loss of a loved one.
- Pregnancy-related issues (e.g., postpartum depression).
- Exposure to environmental toxins.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

1. Early Detection and Intervention:

- Recognize early signs of distress and seek help. Regular screenings, especially for those with a family history.

2. Lifestyle Changes:

- Diet:** Follow a nutrient-rich, balanced diet.
- Exercise:** Engage in regular physical activity.
- Sleep:** Maintain a consistent sleep schedule.

3. Stress Management:

- Practice mindfulness or meditation. Develop healthy coping mechanisms like journaling or hobbies.

4. Build Social Connections:

- Stay connected with family and friends. Join support groups or community activities.

5. Mental Health Education:

- Promote mental health awareness and literacy. Reduce stigma around seeking help for mental health issues.

6. Professional Help:

- Seek therapy, counseling, or psychiatric care as needed. Adhere to prescribed treatment plans (therapy, medication).

In ancient civilizations, attitudes and beliefs about mental illness varied across cultures and time periods. Here are some examples:

Ancient Mesopotamia

1. Demonization: Mental illnesses were often attributed to demonic possession or evil spirits.
2. Punishment: People with mental illnesses were sometimes punished or ostracized.

Ancient Egypt

1. Spiritual imbalance: Mental illnesses were believed to result from an imbalance of the spiritual forces that governed the body.
2. Treatment through rituals: Priests and healers used rituals, prayers, and sacrifices to restore balance and treat mental illnesses.

Ancient Greece

1. Humoral theory: Mental illnesses were attributed to imbalances of the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile).
2. Philosophical and literary depictions: Mental illnesses were depicted in the works of philosophers like Aristotle and Plato, as well as in literature, such as in the tragedies of Sophocles.

Ancient Rome

1. **Influence of Greek humoral theory:** Roman physicians adopted the humoral theory to explain mental illnesses.
2. **Stigmatization:** People with mental illnesses were often stigmatized and marginalized.

Ancient India (Ayurveda)

1. **Tridosha theory:** Mental illnesses were attributed to imbalances of the three doshas (Vata, Pitta, and Kapha).
2. **Holistic treatment:** Ayurvedic practitioners used a holistic approach, incorporating diet, lifestyle, and spiritual practices to treat mental illnesses.

Ancient China

1. **Yin-yang and five elements theory:** Mental illnesses were attributed to imbalances of the yin-yang and five elements.
1. **Acupuncture and herbal medicine:** Chinese practitioners used acupuncture and herbal medicine to treat mental illnesses. These ancient civilizations' attitudes and beliefs about mental illness reflect a mix of spiritual, philosophical, and medical understandings. While some views may seem outdated or stigmatizing by modern standards, they demonstrate the ongoing human quest to comprehend and address mental health.

Medieval wellbeing! During the Middle Ages, wellbeing was often viewed through the lens of spirituality, community, and physical health. Here are some aspects of medieval wellbeing:

Spiritual Wellbeing

1. Faith and prayer: People believed that a strong faith and regular prayer could bring comfort, guidance, and protection.
2. Church and community: The church played a central role in medieval life, providing a sense of community, support, and spiritual guidance.

Physical Wellbeing

1. Diet and nutrition: Medieval diets varied depending on social class, but often included bread, pottage, and vegetables.
2. Physical activity: People engaged in physical labor, hunting, and other outdoor activities to maintain physical health.
3. Herbal remedies: Herbal remedies and traditional medicine were used to treat illnesses and injuries.

Emotional and Mental Wellbeing

1. Social support: Family, friends, and community provided emotional support and a sense of belonging.
2. Storytelling and entertainment: Minstrels, troubadours, and other performers provided entertainment and distraction from daily life.
3. Meditation and contemplation: Monasteries and convents provided spaces for meditation, contemplation, and spiritual reflection.'

Occupational Wellbeing

1. Guilds and apprenticeships: Guilds provided training, support, and a sense of community for artisans and craftsmen.
2. Agricultural work: Many people worked in agriculture, which provided a sense of purpose and connection to the land. These aspects of medieval wellbeing highlight the importance of community, spirituality, and physical health during this period.

MODERN ATTITUDES AND BELIEFS ABOUT MENTAL ILLNESS

Medical Model

1. **Biological basis:** Mental illnesses are recognized as having a biological basis, with genetics, neurochemistry, and brain structure playing a role.
2. **Diagnostic criteria:** Standardized diagnostic criteria, such as the DSM-5, are used to diagnose mental illnesses.
3. **Evidence-based treatments:** Treatments, such as medication and therapy, are based on scientific evidence and research.

Societal Attitudes

1. **Reducing stigma:** Efforts to reduce stigma and promote awareness, such as Mental Health Awareness Month, have increased.
2. **Increased support:** Support for mental health has increased, with more resources available for treatment and support.
3. **Growing recognition of mental health importance:** Mental health is increasingly recognized as essential to overall health and wellbeing.

Cultural and Individual Perspectives

1. Cultural influences: Cultural background and individual experiences can influence attitudes towards mental illness.
2. Personal responsibility: Some individuals may view mental illness as a personal responsibility, while others may see it as a medical condition.
3. Trauma-informed care: There is a growing recognition of the importance of trauma-informed care and the impact of trauma on mental health.

Technology and Mental Health

1. Digital mental health resources: Online resources, such as therapy apps and online support groups, have increased access to mental health support.
2. Social media and mental health: Social media has both positive and negative effects on mental health, with concerns about cyberbullying, comparison, and decreased face-to-face interaction.
3. Teletherapy and online counseling: Teletherapy and online counseling have increased access to mental health services, especially for rural or underserved populations. These modern attitudes and beliefs about mental illness reflect a more nuanced and multifaceted understanding of mental health.

Concept of Normality and Abnormality

The concepts of **normality** and **abnormality** are central to understanding human behavior, particularly in psychology and psychiatry. These terms help differentiate between behaviors, emotions, and thoughts that are typical or socially acceptable (normal) versus those that deviate significantly (abnormal).

Normality

Normality refers to behavior, thoughts, or emotions that align with cultural, societal, or statistical standards. It is often considered the baseline or "average" behavior in a given context.

Key Approaches to Normality:

1. Statistical Normality:

1. Behavior or traits that fall within the statistical average or typical range.
2. Example: Most people have an IQ between 85 and 115.

2. Social or Cultural Norms:

1. Behaviors that conform to societal or cultural expectations.
2. Example: Greeting someone with a handshake in certain cultures.

3. Functional Normality:

1. The ability to perform daily tasks and fulfill roles effectively.
2. Example: Holding a job or maintaining relationships.

4. Subjective Normality:

1. What individuals perceive as "normal" for themselves.
2. Example: A person feeling content with their habits and lifestyle.

Abnormality

Abnormality refers to behaviors, thoughts, or emotions that deviate significantly from cultural norms, societal expectations, or statistical averages. It often implies dysfunction, distress, or risk to oneself or others.

Key Characteristics of Abnormality:

1.Deviance:

1. Behavior that violates societal or cultural norms.
2. Example: Dressing inappropriately for an occasion due to delusions.

2.Distress:

1. Emotional or psychological suffering.
2. Example: Intense anxiety interfering with daily life.

3.Dysfunction:

1. Impairment in functioning (e.g., work, relationships, self-care).
2. Example: A person unable to leave their home due to phobias.

4.Danger:

1. Behavior that poses a risk to oneself or others.
2. Example: Self-harm or aggressive outbursts.

5.Statistical Rarity:

1. Traits or behaviors that are statistically unusual.
2. Example: Very high or low IQ.

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