

PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH

THE HEALTH TRIANGLE

Fig 1 – 3 page 6

THE HEALTH TRIANGLE

MENTAL HEALTH: DEFINITIONS

- -Mental health is defined as 1) being comfortable with yourself, 2) feeling good about your relationships with others, and 3) being able to meet the demands of life.
- -Mental illness: 1) having low self-esteem, 2) incapable to relate to others, 3) not able to cope with problems, 4) having difficulty distinguishing among fantasy, imagination, and reality.

PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH: HOW?

- Know yourself. (A prerequisite for being comfortable with it.
- Understand about emotions and learn to cope with and express emotions in healthful ways, (for good relations with others and prevention of mental trouble).
- Know about stress and how to cope with it in healthful ways.

EXPLORING THE SELF

- Self-knowledge: key element in learning to accept yourself.
- Personality: an individual's unique pattern of characteristics, physical, mental, emotional, and social.
- Heredity, culture, environment, and self-concept influence personality.
- Self-concept: beliefs about yourself determined by self evaluation of your strengths and limitations.

EXPLORING THE SELF

- The self: a complex entity of many selves.
- Ideal self: your conscience.
- Public self: opinion you want others to form of you.
- Private self: is the actual you.
- Ideal, public, and private self influence your personality and self-concept.
- Similar ideal, public, and private self contribute to mental health.

EXPLORING THE SELF: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

- Knowing and satisfying basic needs promote physical and mental growth.
- Five levels of needs identified by Maslow: 1) physiological needs: food, water, sleep to sustain life, 2) safety and security, provided by parents, 3) love and affection, provided by the family, 4) self-esteem: acquired as you develop skills, 5) self-actualization: a lifetime process of always doing your best to fulfill all your potentialities.

EXPLORING THE SELF: DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

- Examining your philosophy of life is another way of knowing yourself.
- Philosophy of life reflects your values. (your parents influence your values)
- Philosophy of life influences your thoughts. Thoughts influence emotions. Emotions influence performance.

EXPRESSING EMOTIONS: DEFINITIONS

- Emotions: feelings that arise in response to life situations.
- Happy emotions, e.g., being loved, have a holistic effect on lifestyle and contribute to optimum health.
- Unhappy emotions result from situations of loss and rejection, e.g., loss of love, loss of control, 3) loss of confidence. Negative influence on mental health.

EXPRESSING EMOTIONS IN HEALTHFUL WAYS

- Learning to cope with / express emotions is important for mental health.
- Anxiety: worry about anticipated/imagined situation. Risk behavior: pretending you are not anxious. Healthful behavior: 1) identify (what is causing my anxiety? ;how can I deal with the situation?). 2) Exercise.

EXPRESSING EMOTIONS

- ANGER: usually follows a hurt.
- Bottling it up harmful.
- Express it in healthful ways, e.g., talk (or pretend to talk) about your hurt feelings.
- GUILT: feeling of having done wrong.
- Denying it may intensify the feelings of guilt.
- Admit you have done something wrong, apologize, and accept responsibility for your actions. This usually relieves the guilt.

EXPRESSING EMOTIONS: DEPRESSION

- Depression: feeling of sadness, hopelessness, or helplessness, resulting in loss of pleasure and interest in usual activities.
- Up to 50% of patients are not aware that they are depressed.
- Talking to someone, engaging in exercise, eating a balanced diet, may help; if not, professional help may be needed.

DEFENSE MECHANISMS

- Instead of expressing emotions, a person may use defense mechanisms.
- A defense mechanism is a behavior that is used to cope with uncomfortable situations or emotions.
- Defense mechanisms may help solve problems by suppressing emotional responses and allowing you time to think.
- It is important to evaluate your use of defense mechanisms, because they may also be used to avoid solving problems.

DEFENSE MECHANISMS: EXAMPLES

DISPLACEMENT: transferring emotions from the original source to another object

RISK BEHAVIOR: you take your feelings out on others, alienating them; the conflict is not resolved.

PROJECTION: shifting the blame and responsibility for your actions/thoughts to someone else.

RISK BEHAVIOR: you do not take responsibility for your actions.

DEFENSE MECHANISMS: MORE EXAMPLES

RATIONALIZATION:
giving acceptable reasons for a behavior that are not the real reasons

RISK BEHAVIOR:
rationalization keeps you from feeling guilty rather than taking the appropriate action.

REGRESSION:
reverting behavior to childish ways.

RISK BEHAVIOR: your behavior is emotionally immature. Problems are handled like you did as a child.

LIFE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Develop a positive self-concept by developing strengths, recognizing limitations, and understanding your feelings.
- Make your ideal, public, and private selves consistent with each other.
- Take steps to satisfy your basic needs.

MORE LIFE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Be aware when you are using defense mechanisms, try to identify what you are trying to avoid.
- Develop a philosophy of life that influences your thoughts, emotions, and body's performance in healthful ways.
- Express love, hurt, anxiety, anger, and guilt in healthful ways.

MENTAL DISORDERS: TYPES

- **ANXIETY DISORDERS:** Persistent or recurrent manifestations of fear but cause of danger not recognized.(Some anxiety in day-to-day living is normal).
- Types of anxiety disorders include PHOBIAS, obsessive/compulsive, and general anxiety disorders.
- **DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS:** Abrupt but temporary loss of memory or identity due to psychological factors.

MENTAL DISORDERS: MORE TYPES

- **MOOD DISORDERS:** Extreme moods that interfere with daily living such as depression and bipolar disorder. (It is normal to experience different moods, e.g., loving/happy moods, hurt/anxious moods).
- **PERSONALITY DISORDERS:** Adults with unusual patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting that interfere with daily living.

MENTAL DISORDERS: SERIOUS TYPES

- **SCHIZOPHRENIA:** Breakdown of logical thought processes. Delusions. Hallucinations, e.g., delusions of persecution or grandeur in paranoid schizophrenia.
- **SUICIDE:** not necessarily a mental disorder. Often related to loss or rejection, e.g., loss of love, control, confidence, or health.

MENTAL DISORDERS: SUICIDE

- **SIGNS:** Drastic changes in personality, eating and sleeping habits; withdrawal from family and friends; loss of interest in personal appearance or work...
- **IF SUSPECTED:** Inform others (family, friends); encourage suicidal person to talk, but don't give false reassurances that everything will be OK; seek professional help.

RECOGNIZING MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

- **SIX WARNING SIGNS:** boredom with daily activities; illness and mental distress; chronic anxiety and guilt; failing performance at work; unexpected failure in personal relationships; fear of being unmasked if private and public self are different.

MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS: WHAT TO DO?

- Change risk behaviors, e.g., lack of exercise.(warning signs indicate it is time to do so).
- Seek help: this may range from talking to family or friends to consulting a professional mental health specialist.

STRESS: DEFINITIONS

- **STRESS:** a non-specific internal response of the body to any demand, (stressor), made upon it.
- Stressors may be physical, e.g., a race, mental, e.g., sitting for an exam , or social, e.g., asking for a date.
- **EUSTRESS:** a healthful response copes with the stress successfully.
- **DISTRESS:** Unsuccessful coping with, or harmful response to a stress, e.g., you are overwhelmed by anxiety and cannot perform.

STRESS: HOLISTIC EFFECT

- A stressor in one area of health affects other areas. Examples include:
 - Anxiety (mental health)
 - Hypertension, peptic ulcer (diseases)
 - Increased rate of accidents (safety and first aid) . It is responsible to avoid driving a car when you are experiencing distress.

THE GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME

- The body responds to stress in three stages collectively referred to as the GDS.
- The alarm stage: adrenaline is secreted and prepares the body for action (fight or flight).
- The resistance stage: attempts to regain homeostasis (internal balance); the increased pulse, BP and RR of the alarm stage return towards normal.
- The exhaustion stage: if the resistance stage or a distress is prolonged, harmful changes occur and resistance to disease is lowered.

STRESS MANGEMENT SKILLS

- Knowing and using stress management skills helps keep you healthy,
- Diet and exercise are important, e.g., consuming 250 mg of caffeine over a two-hour period may trigger the alarm stage of GAS. Exercise releases endorphins, brings about feelings of well-being, and strengthens the heart and muscles.
- Learn to use techniques such as meditation, or progressive relaxation, to enhance relaxation.

MENTAL HEALTH: LIFE MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- Assess mental health status regularly: do I have a plan to cope with stress? Do I eat a balanced diet and get enough exercise, rest and sleep...
- Avoid environmental stress, (e.g., high levels of noise or air pollution),.
- Talk over your problems with family or friends.
- Engage in a regular exercise program.
- Select friends with healthful habits
- Avoid driving when experiencing distress
- Learn to express emotions in healthful ways
- Be aware of signs of suicide and mental trouble

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTION

- Fertilization occurs when ovum released from ovary is penetrated by sperm to form zygote in Fallopian tube.
- Zygote divides as it moves to uterus to form embryo which implants in uterine wall
- Placenta anchors embryo to uterus. Umbilical cord anchors embryo to placenta and brings O₂ and nutrients from mother to baby and wastes from baby to mother.
- A blocked Fallopian tube can cause an ectopic pregnancy (extra-uterine).

PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT

- Prenatal development is the growth of a baby in the uterus from conception to birth.
- First trimester: by the end of the 2nd month, the embryo is recognized as human and is called a fetus.
- Second trimester: muscles develop. Fetus begins to move.
- Third trimester: development is completed.

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT

- The mother's health status, diet, life style, and prenatal care influence outcome.
- Adequate amounts of proteins, Ca, Fe, and vitamins A, B, C, and D important. Poor nutrition can lead to slower fetal growth, premature delivery, low birth weight with increased risk to baby.
- Alcohol, smoking, and all drugs (except those prescribed by physicians) must be stopped; they may cross the placenta and harm the fetus.

PRENATAL CARE

- Proper medical care can detect, prevent, and/or treat problems that may occur in some pregnancies:
- Toxaemia: sudden rise of BP, proteinuria, and edema, after the 20th week;
- Birth defects may result from drugs, poor diet, infections, e.g., rubella, or may be genetic;
- Genetic counseling (if family history of genetic disease), ultrasound, and amniocentesis (after 16th week), can decrease risk of birth defects.
- Anti-D vaccine given to Rh-ve mothers immediately after delivery of a Rh+ve baby prevents damage to another Rh+ve baby during the next pregnancy.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Throughout the life cycle, from birth till death, physical mental, and social changes occur. Understanding and coping with these changes in healthful ways helps insure optimum health.
- Growth and development in children occur in predictable stages. Specific skills and experiences are acquired at each stage which prepare the child for the challenges of the next stage.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Growth and development occur in predictable stages. Skills and experiences are acquired at each stage which prepare the child for the challenges of the next stage.
- Infancy: from birth to 1 year. Infants grow rapidly, and explore their environment especially when they begin to crawl.
- Childhood: 1 year till puberty. Self-esteem, decision making, and competence are acquired .Exposure to caring and loving people is important to foster a sense of worth and acceptance.

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

- Adolescence: between 12 and 19 years. Characterized by a growth spurt, 2ndary sex characteristics, existential questions (what do I believe?), greater independence from parents and considerable influence of peer groups.
- Parents can contribute to a healthy adolescence by 1) allowing children to develop independently, feel secure and practice self-discipline and 2) maintaining contact with their children by taking an interest in their activities and showing trust and approval.

ADULTHOOD

- Adults are characterized by independence, self-responsibility, and seeking intimate relations (the 30s), adjusting life goals and seeking standards, e.g., quitting an unsatisfactory job and looking for a new one (the 40s), and , usually but not necessarily, satisfaction at what they have accomplished (50s and older).

COMPLETION OF THE LIFE CYCLE: OLD AGE

- Biologically, a person begins to age after maturity, around age 25, when cells die faster than they can reproduce.
- Old age is a state of mind (you might still be young at age 75 if you keep up to date with current events and stay fit).
- Chronic diseases in old age, e.g., heart disease, hypertension, and cancer, are often related to correctable risk behavior rather than old age.
- Choosing health-promoting behaviors when young helps insure good health when old.

AGING: SOCIAL ASPECTS AND PROBLEMS

- Ageism: discrimination against a person based on age.
- Stereotyping: the assumption that people in a particular group will think or behave in a certain way. A common stereotype is that older people fail intellectually. Most people >age 65 are mentally fit. Only a few develop dementia (deterioration of memory and other mental functions).
- Loneliness when ageing friends or spouses die.
- Social isolation of older people can be avoided by spending some time with them, and encouraging them to seek new friends and participate in new activities.