

***UNDERSTANDING MENTAL
HEALTH***



What Is Mental Illness.....

Mental Health and Mental Illness

Good health is more than a physically healthy body. Just as the physical body can fall ill, so can the mind. Feeling capable and competent, being able to handle normal levels of stress, maintaining satisfying relationships, leading an independent life and being able to recover from difficult situations are all signs of mental well-being. Disturbances in thinking, feeling, mood, memory and judgment resulting in behaviour which might seem irrational are signs of mental illness.

The perceptions that exist about persons with mental illness as being “*paagal*” or “loose in the head” leads to the stigma that exists around mental illness. A person suffering from mental illness is also often believed to be under the influence of a supernatural phenomena or being possessed by evil spirits. ***There is no basis to these perceptions. Mental illness is an illness like any other, which can be treated medically***

Most mental illnesses can be treated and cured if they are identified early and the right treatment is undertaken. The fact that the behaviour of a person with mental illness is branded as unacceptable and culturally inappropriate makes it difficult for the affected persons and their families to accept and cope with a mental disorder. One should not hesitate in approaching a psychiatrist/general practitioner if someone you know is affected from mental illness. In the long term, this is for the benefit of the person with mental illness. ***A mental illness can always be handled with proper medication and care***

Some Major Mental Disorders

If a person

- believes that everyone around him is trying to harm or attack him
- is hearing voices and seeing things that are not there
- thinks that things around him are very loud, very bright
- believe that the place that they are in is unreal and that he is in an unreal time

he could actually be suffering from ***Schizophrenia*** and we may not know about it.....

Sometimes a person could be so intensely sad, miserable or gloomy that he or she

- is constantly thinking of negative things
- is using substances like drugs or alcohol all the time and cannot live without it
- is constantly thinking of committing suicide
- is constantly feeling so worthless, hopeless and guilty that he does not talk or meet anyone

Such a person could actually be suffering from a mental disorder called ***Major Depression*** which we need to take very seriously.....

A person at times could be so excited, happy and ecstatic that he is unrealistic, has impractical thoughts and could also become violent to prove his point.....the same person at another time could be feeling so sad, could be so depressed that he loses interest in just about everything and is thinking of killing himself. Do not ignore or pass of such behaviour as just simple mood swings. A person undergoing such a mood change from *excessively high mood to excessively low mood* could be suffering from a major mental disorder called ***Bipolar Disorder***, which needs medical intervention.

Sometimes a person could feel, see, hear things like one does in schizophrenia and at the same time also be depressive or feel elated as in a bipolar disorder. Such a person could be suffering from another major mental disorder called ***Schizoaffective Disorder.***

All the above stated mental disorders are major mental disorders which are usually accompanied by severe psychosis. A psychotic condition implies that a person has lost touch with reality and loses his or her insight i.e. the person is not aware of his self and surroundings. A person in this condition is not even aware that he or she is ill. The person requires **immediate psychiatric care and intervention.**

Minor Mental Disorders

When a person is affected by a minor mental disorder, he or she may not lose sense of his self and surroundings. But such a condition also needs to be taken seriously. These disorders could become very severe and they also need medical treatment.

Some of the common minor mental disorders are

Anxiety Disorders

Eating Disorders

Sleep disorders

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Post Traumatic Stress Disorders (PTSD)

For further information or help CONTACT any of these organizations in your area -

ASHADEEP

Islampur Road, Gandhi Basti
Guwahati - 781003
Ph : 0361-2666794
societyashadeep@yahoo.com

ATSTMUC (SWABALAMBAN)

Ramnagar Road No. 1
P.O. Ramnagar
Agartala, West Tripura
Ph : 0381-2208507/2380013
swabalamban@rediffmail.com

PRERONA SISHU BIKASH KENDRA

Cinnamora, Jorhat - 785008
Ph : 0376-2361386
prerona@123rediff.com

BETHANY SOCIETY

Lady Veronica Lane
Laitumkhrah, Shillong
Ph : 0364-2210631/2227705
bethanyngo@rediffmail.com

'the ant'

Ward 10, B.O.C. Gate
Bongaigaon(N), Assam
Ph : 03664-225506
theant@rediffmail.com

SATRA

Dhanai Bora Chowk
Sipajhar, Darrang
satrasipajhar@yahoo.co.uk

DESHABANDHU CLUB

Behara Bazar
Cachar, Silchar
Ph : 03842-283503
deshabandhuclub@rediffmail.com