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APS MENTAL HEALTH SERIES: FROM RESISTANCE TO RESILIENCE

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing. The status of one's mental health affects how he or she thinks, feels, and acts during the challenges of life. It also has an impact on how a person handles stress, makes choices, and relates to others. Mental health is critical at all stages of life from birth to early and late adulthood. ⁽¹⁾

What are mental disorders?

Mental disorders are serious health conditions that can affect a person's "thinking, mood, and behavior". ⁽²⁾ They can affect one's ability to relate to others and to perform daily functions. For some people, mental disorders are occasional and short-term. For other people mental disorders can be long-term challenges. There are treatments for mental disorders and people can get better. Many people with mental disorders recovery completely. ⁽¹⁾

Why is mental health important?

Mental health is important because it affects how people live and work. It can have an impact on the ability to cope with stress, relationships, and realizing one's full potential. Mental health can also have an impact on physical health. For example, mental disorders can increase the risk of developing type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke. ⁽²⁾

What can affect mental health?

There are many factors that can affect mental health either positively or negatively including:

- Biological factors such as genetics and brain chemistry
- Life experiences such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems
- Lifestyle factors such as diet, physical activity, and substance use

- Difficult situations such as caring of an ill relative, a divorce, or financial problems
- Practicing meditation, gratitude, or relaxation techniques ⁽²⁾

What is Trauma?

Trauma, broadly defined, is the result of an event, series of events, or a set of circumstances that an individual experiences as harmful or threatening that can have lasting adverse effects on that individual's physical, social, emotional well-being and functioning. Events or circumstances can be either physical or emotional. ⁽³⁾

Types of Trauma

Acute trauma is trauma that results from a single incident. Chronic trauma is the result of repeated and prolonged experiences, for example experiencing domestic violence.

Complex Trauma is the result of exposure to varied, multiple traumatic events. Often events that result in complex trauma are invasive and severe such as abuse or profound neglect. ⁽³⁾

Additionally, there is a new area of research for what is known as Intergenerational trauma. This is defined as trauma that can be transferred from generation to generation. Parents who have experienced unresolved trauma may transmit maladaptive coping mechanisms to their children. ⁽⁴⁾

Historical trauma is a type of intergenerational trauma. It is trauma related to physical, psychological, and/or spiritual trauma among a community or group that is related to historical, systematic abuse, or injustice. Examples include, but are not limited to, the experience of African American slavery and segregation, the Holocaust, and the colonization of Native Americans. ⁽⁴⁾

Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)

The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE) is a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Kaiser Permanente. It is one of the largest studies of how childhood abuse along with household challenges can affect an individual's health and well-being later in life. ⁽⁵⁾

Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are events that are potentially traumatic and occur from birth to age 17. Some examples include:

- experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect
- witnessing violence – either at home or in the community
- having a family member attempt or die by suicide
- growing up in a household with mental health problems
- instability due to parental separation

ACEs are linked to mental health, substance misuse, and chronic health problems. ⁽⁶⁾ The ACE study concluded that Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have a “tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and lifelong health and opportunity.” ⁽⁷⁾

DATA

National

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 25 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24 ⁽⁸⁾

“Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States. It accounts for the loss of more than 41,000 American lives each year, more than double the number of lives lost to homicide.” ⁽⁹⁾

Regional (Missouri/Kansas)

When it comes to experiencing serious mental illness, Missouri and Kansas numbers are similar to the rest of the nation. ^(10, 11)

Differences between states

Kansas' annual average of mental health treatment/counseling among adults aged 18 or older with any mental illness (AMI) was 48.3% from 2010-2014. This is higher than the annual average for the nation (42.7%) from 2010 to 2014. ⁽¹⁰⁾

Missouri's annual average of mental health treatment/counseling among adults aged 18 or older with any mental illness (AMI) was 45.3% — similar to the annual average for the nation (42.7%) from 2010 to 2014. ⁽¹¹⁾

Local (Kansas City Metro)

15.1 % of Kansas City, KS and 14.4 % of Kansas City, MO adults reported frequent mental distress in 2017, higher than Dashboard-City Average of 13.7% ^(12, 13)

Resources for further information

Glossary of Mental Health Terms, Greater Kansas City Mental Health Coalition <https://itsok.us/mental-health-resources/>

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/acestudy/index.html>

MentalHealth.gov <https://www.mentalhealth.gov>

MedlinePlus - Mental Health <https://medlineplus.gov/mentalhealth.html>

National Alliance on Mental Illness <https://www.nami.org>

CDC - Mental Health <https://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth>

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