



Mental Illness

Mental Health

Mental illness is an important public health problem in itself- about 25% of U.S. adults have mental illness. Mental illness is a condition that impacts a person's thinking, feeling, or mood, as defined by the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Mental illness may affect a person's ability to relate to others and function on a daily basis. Mental illnesses include bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and schizophrenia, among others.

Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar Disorder is a brain disorder that causes unusual shifts in mood, energy, activity levels, and the ability to carry out day-to-day tasks.

Bipolar I Disorder defined by manic episodes that last at least 7 days, or by manic symptoms that are so severe that the person needs immediate hospital care. Usually, depressive episodes occur as well, typically lasting at least 2 weeks. Episodes of depression with mixed features (having depression and manic symptoms at the same time) are also possible.

Bipolar II Disorder defined by a pattern of depressive episodes and hypomanic episodes, but not the full-blown manic episodes described above.

Cyclothymic Disorder (also called cyclothymic) defined by numerous periods of hypomanic symptoms as well numerous periods of depressive symptoms lasting for at least 2 years (1 year in children and adolescents). However, the symptoms do not meet the diagnostic requirements for a hypomanic episode and a depressive episode.

Other Specified and Unspecified Bipolar and Related Disorders defined by bipolar disorder symptoms that do not match the three categories listed above.

Signs and Symptoms:

- Manic Episode:
 - Feel very up, high, or elate
 - Have a lot of energy
 - Have increased activity levels
 - Feel jumpy or wired
- Depressive Episode:
 - Feel very sad, down, empty, or hopeless
 - Have very little energy
 - Have decreased activity levels

Diagnosis:

Proper diagnosis and treatment help people with bipolar disorder lead healthy and productive lives. Talking with a doctor or other licensed mental health professional is the first step for anyone who thinks he or she may have bipolar disorder.

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder:

To be diagnosed with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, an adult must have all of the following for at least 1 month.

1. At least one re-experiencing symptom:
 - a. Flashbacks reliving the trauma over and over, including physical symptoms like a racing heart or sweating
 - b. Bad dreams
 - c. Frightening thoughts
2. At least one avoidance symptom
 - a. Staying away from places, events, or objects that are reminders of the traumatic experience
 - b. Avoiding thoughts or feelings related to the traumatic event
3. At least two arousal and reactivity symptoms
 - a. Being easily startled
 - b. Feeling tense or on edge
 - c. Having difficulty sleeping
 - d. Having angry outbursts
4. At least two cognition and mood symptoms
 - a. Trouble remembering key features of the traumatic even
 - b. Negative thoughts about oneself or the world
 - c. Distorted feelings like guilt or blame
 - d. Loss of interest in enjoyable activities

Depression:

Signs and Symptoms:

- Persistent sad, anxious, or empty mood
- Feelings of hopelessness, or pessimism
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment

Remember:

USTPD working with the UST community to make a safer campus.



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