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 event
   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.

University of St. Thomas Police Department
713-525-3888
police@stthom.edu