Mental Health as a Whole:

This episode we will be discussing what mental health is, some of the stigmas associated, and why it is so important to be maintained. In addition, we will provide you with encouraging tips and steps to promote and pursue mental health in a positive way.

DSM 5 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th Edition Criterion for eating disorders is basically a list of stipulations that an individual must meet before being diagnosed with an eating disorder. This diagnosis is determined based on an assessment of these stipulations being present in an individual. This assessment is carried out by one or more clinicians.

Mental health is defined as a person’s condition with regard to their psychological, social, and emotional well-being. It affects the way that we think, feel, and act while also helping to determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices (DHHS 2020). Can affect ANY demographic and is of great important

But why is it so important? Mental health is important for a number of different reasons.

1. It is essential to personal well-being, family, and interpersonal relationships (social and emotional interactions between two or more individuals in an environment) as well as the ability to contribute to society (HPS 2020).
2. It is important because mental disorders are among the most common causes of disability… And mental illness as a whole is among the highest in sense of resulting burdens of alllllllll diseases at 43.6 million people in the U.S... and that’s just people who are 18+ years of age (HPS 2020).
3. Mental health has been proven to be closely connected with physical health by playing a role in peoples’ ability to maintain good physical health (HPS 2020).
4. The detriment of an individuals’ mental health can affect their ability to participate in health-promoting behaviors such as treatment and recovery (HPS 2020).
5. Mental health, positive or negative can greatly influence an individuals’ relationships, views, and beliefs about themselves as it pertains to their body image, self – worth, sense of confidence, perspective of life and/or self – esteem.

There are many factors that can/could contribute to the status of ones’ mental health and/or the development of mental health problems in the future (DHHS 2020). Just to name a few of these noteworthy contributing factors that could influence this development are genetics, family history of mental health problems, brain chemistry, trauma and/or abuse (DHHS 2020).

With mental health comes mental disorders. A mental disorder is defined as a developed syndrome that is characterized by a significant disturbance in the individuals’ cognition, emotion regulation and/or behaviors. These disturbances then reflect a dysfunction in the psychological, biological, or developmental processes underlying their mental function.

Typically, mental disorders are associated with significant distress in social, occupational, or other important activities (Maisel Ph.D 2013). To give you a few examples of a FUCK TON… MULTITUDE of different mental disorders Alcohol Addiction, Anorexia Nervosa, Anxiety Disorder (GAD) just in the A section (MHMS 2021).

All of these disorders have their own set of situational factors and criteria that is met, however a lot of the stigmas and stereotypes surrounding mental health pertain to all the different types of disorders before, during, and after treatment.

What is a stigma and where does it come from?

It is a social, physical or mental deficiency that could cause someone to develop a negative attitude towards someone. Generally, stigmas can aid in the development of stereotypes which are defined as a widely held but fixed and oversimplified images or ideas of a particular type of person or thing and vice versa. That’s why I chose to use them together.

Stigmas/Stereotypes of Mental Health (Newman 2020):

1. Mental health problems are uncommon… Currently, 450 million people are experiencing mental health problems in the U.S.
2. Panic attacks can be fatal… They are not fatal, although they may put you at a higher risk of having an accident.
3. People with mental health conditions cannot work… The majority of people with mental health issues can be just as productive as individuals without mental health disorders.
4. Mental health problems are a sign of weakness… Mental health disorders are illnesses, not signs of poor character. If anything, the opposite is true!
5. Only people without friends need therapists… Put it into perspective – Large difference between speaking with a friend and being part of a structured talking therapy sessions.
6. Mental health problems are permanent… Not necessarily true - May not be a “life sentence” or relevant in all situations. Many people will recover to a greater or lesser degree. Important to consider what “recovery” means for you as opposed to someone else, because like the disorders themselves, the recovery from those disorders is just as individualized of a process.
7. Addiction is a lack of willpower… Experts consider drug use disorders to be chronic diseases stating that people with addiction seem not to be short on willpower; rather, recovery is dependent on developing strategies to preserve willpower by controlling the environment.
8. People with schizophrenia have a split personality… 100% A MYTH. Schizophrenia is characterized by distortions in thinking, perception, emotions, language, sense of self, and behavior. These distortions can include hallucinations and delusions associated with all of the senses. This misconception could possibly be derived from the meaning of Schizophrenia which means “splitting of the mind”. The gentleman who discovered this mental illness Eugen Bleuler was trying to “capture the fragmentation and disintegration of the mind and behavior as the essence of the disorder.” With that being said, schizophrenia is not the same as dissociative identity disorder, which you may better know it by its’ previous name, multiple personality disorder.
9. Eating disorders only affect females… Males currently account for 10-25% of all cases of anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating disorder.
10. Eating disorders are a lifestyle choice… VERY HARMFUL – Eating disorders are very serious mental health conditions, and in extreme cases, can be fatal.
11. All people with a mental illness are violent… Media amplifies this sensationally – more often than not however, people with mental illness are the victims of violence rather than the perpetrators.

Tips/Skills to Promote & Pursue Mental Health in a Positive Way:

1. Try to avoid mind-altering substances such as caffeine, alcohol and/or illicit drugs (Shepard MD 2020).
2. Prioritize sleep, hygiene, a balanced diet, and at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week (Shepard MD 2020).
3. Practice mindfulness, meditation, and/or prayer (Shepard MD 2020)
4. Learn to prioritize your responsibilities and unload if you have to (Shepard MD 2020).
5. Build and maintain supportive relationships to encourage and surround yourself with positivity (Shepard MD 2020)
6. Practice gratitude and give to others to broaden your perspective (Shepard MD 2020)
7. Set daily achievable goals and use affirmations via phone reminders (Shepard MD 2020)
8. Challenge your negative thoughts and practice self-compassion (Shepard MD 2020)
9. Push yourself to learn something new
10. Keep a journal or engage in something creative that you enjoy and serves as an outlet for you.
11. Talk to your doctor and be an active participant in the process of treatment
12. MOST IMPORTANT… FAKE IT TILL YA MAKE IT.

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