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MENTAL HEALTH V/S MENTAL ILLNESS

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Mental health is widely regarded as an essential aspect of overall well-being. Various health systems around the globe including auditory resources provide techniques and teachings that promote strategies recognised as effective for enhancing inner health. Marie Jahoda has listed five crucial elements that she believes are important for improving inner health and well-being i.e. Time Structure, Social Contacts, Shared Efforts and Goals, Social Identity and Status, and Regular Striving. Conditions and environments that support this vital information enhance inner health. Mental fitness seeks to improve adaptability to everyday challenges related to mental health, aiming to prevent the escalation of anxiety, depression, and suicidal tendencies. It also empowers individuals to effectively manage these issues should they arise. A healthy life is supported by companions who provide reassurance, the love of family (including parents, children, partners, and relatives), and positive relationships with colleagues and community members. These factors are essential for maintaining inner health. Mental health encompasses a person's mental, emotional, and psychological well-being, while mental illness includes health conditions characterized by changes in feelings, thoughts, behaviours, or a combination of these.

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It is common for everyone to experience mental health challenges at some point in their lives; however, not everyone is diagnosed with a mental illness. It is crucial to recognize that the process of diagnosing mental illness is delicate and complex, and seeking help is a significant step toward receiving appropriate treatment. A key insight of the mental health continuum concept is that the human mind is in a constant state of flux.

We can use this continuum to get to know ourselves, listen to ourselves, and live happier, more fulfilling lives.

Mental health is not merely the absence of mental illness; it represents a state of well-being that encompasses the ability to enjoy life. It is generally regarded as a positive attribute. From the perspective of positive psychology, inner health involves the capacity to enjoy life while achieving a balance between one's environment and efforts toward cognitive adaptability. This understanding of inner health emphasizes emotional well-being, the ability to live a fulfilling and creative life, and resilience in facing life's inevitable challenges. While some discussions focus on joy and happiness, others emphasize the importance of adaptability in overcoming difficulties. Unfortunately, some individuals struggle with poor inner health. As noted by the World Health Organization, inner health extends beyond the mere absence of illness, supporting the concept of two distinct dimensions of health.

Marie Jahoda identifies five key factors she believes are essential for happiness: Time Structure, Social Contact, Shared Tasks and Goals, Social Identity and Status, and Regular Effort. Conditions and environments that foster these factors can significantly enhance inner health.

Physical Activity and Physical Activity Therapy

Engaging in physical activity can improve both internal and physical health. Activities such as exercising, walking, or cycling stimulate the production of endorphins, which can elevate mood. Research indicates that exercise can be as effective as antidepressants in treating depression and anxiety. Conversely, a lack of physical activity can negatively impact mental health conditions, potentially leading to issues such as obesity, poor body image, decreased hormone levels, and other health risks associated with mental discomfort.

Also known as recreational therapy or occupational therapy, physical activity therapy promotes health and healing through active participation. Each of these therapeutic approaches has demonstrated efficacy in enhancing inner health and fostering overall well-being.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy encourages activities that improve daily life, such as sound therapy or various sports. Recreational therapy also emphasizes exercise, including walking, yoga, and cycling. Engaging in play is an important way to promote both physical and mental health.

Suggestive Therapy

Suggestive therapy, or creative therapy, encompasses various forms of psychotherapy that incorporate artistic expression. This includes art therapy, music therapy, drama therapy, dance therapy, and poetry therapy. Recently, there has been a growing awareness of the benefits of these therapies, as well as the potential limitations of positive inner health, particularly concerning emotional, social, and spiritual well-being.

Awareness

Awareness is the practice of consciously directing attention to the present moment without judgment, a skill cultivated through contemplation and various training methods. Mindful relaxation techniques, such as breathing exercises and guided imagery, help to relax both the body and mind, thereby reducing stress. Engaging in relaxing practices and setting aside time for oneself contributes positively to mental health.

Awareness is often viewed as a goal-directed state. The focus on conditioning through tone and attention may enhance the goal-directed aspects of consciousness, as practitioners of mindfulness recognize its importance and the value of paying attention to the present moment. Conscious meditation offers several benefits for mental well-being, including reductions in depression, anxiety, and stress.

Contemplation Programs

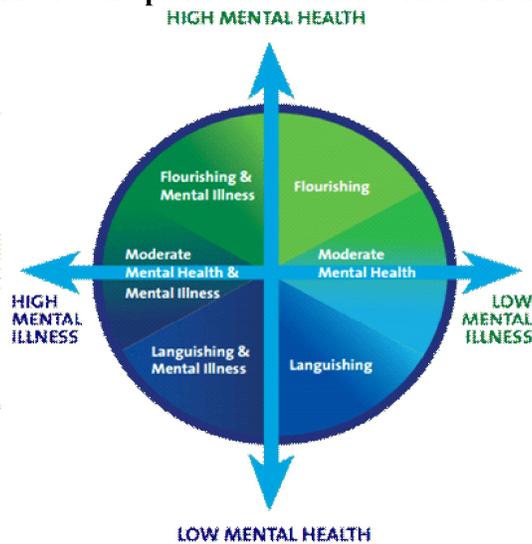
Contemplation programs have proven highly beneficial for the mental health of professionals, particularly in addressing fatigue and enhancing emotional resilience.

Mental Fitness

Mental Fitness is an initiative that encourages individuals to intentionally manage and maintain their mental health through various practices. These may include community engagement, regular social interactions, contemplation, calming exercises, aerobics, mindfulness routines, and adequate sleep. The goal of Mental Fitness is to enhance adaptability to everyday mental health challenges, prevent the escalation of anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts, and equip individuals to cope with these feelings when they arise.

Mental health is dynamic and can fluctuate, improving or deteriorating based on circumstances. It is influenced by psychological, biological, social, and spiritual factors. Regardless of whether we face mental illness, everyone will experience periods of mental health vulnerability and flourishing. Viewing mental health as a continuum rather than a fixed pathology helps to eliminate the barriers that may exist between these states. While everyone may encounter mental health challenges at some point in their lives, not everyone will receive a diagnosis of mental illness. It is essential to understand that diagnosing mental illness is a delicate and complex process. However, seeking help is a significant step toward obtaining appropriate treatment.

Below are Some Examples of the Mental Health Continuum:



Building a Strong Relationship with Yourself

Mental health begins with cultivating a strong relationship with oneself. Acknowledging feelings of tension, worry, and overwhelm is essential for developing a deeper, more meaningful connection with yourself.

The key insight of the mental health continuum concept is that the human mind is in a constant state of flux. By understanding this continuum, we can learn to know ourselves better, listen to our needs, and live happier, more fulfilling lives.

Mental Health Challenges

Just as various activities can enhance psychological well-being, multiple factors also influence it.

Unemployment

Unemployment significantly impacts a person's mental health, self-esteem, and overall well-being. Marie Jahoda identified five essential categories for well-being and argued that unemployed individuals often lack fulfilment in all these areas, which contributes to the high incidence of mental illnesses reported among them. Increased unemployment rates have been linked to a significant rise in mental health issues, particularly depressive disorders.

Emotional Challenges

Emotional well-being refers to the quality of emotions a person experiences and is influenced by various factors, including demographics, economic conditions, and individual circumstances. When serious emotional issues arise, it is crucial to identify and address their underlying causes, often with the assistance of a mental health professional. Preventing emotional challenges involves minimizing risk factors that can undermine self-esteem, self-control, happiness, and social inclusion.

Negative Relationships

Humans are inherently social beings. Alienation from others and social isolation can lead to loneliness and despair. Negative interactions and toxic relationships can further undermine our emotional and mental health, adversely affecting our overall well-being.

Stress

While some stress is a normal aspect of daily life, excessive and prolonged stress can pose a significant threat to mental health. Short-term stress can be beneficial, helping us meet deadlines, prepare for presentations, and maintain productivity. However, when stress becomes overwhelming and chronic, it increases the risk of developing both mental and physical health problems.

By recognising and addressing these challenges, we can work toward promoting better mental health and well-being.

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