

An Overview of Mental Health Disorders



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An Overview of Mental Health Disorders is the first

in a series of educational columns on mental health disorders. The focus of the educational columns will be on those mental health disorders more commonly diagnosed in adults in the United States. My basic reference for this information is the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, Fourth Edition, commonly referred to as the DSM-IV. This manual is produced by the American Psychiatric Association to provide diagnostic criteria to assist psychiatrists in the diagnosis of mental health disorders. I will use other resources to better define the mental health disorders, provide insight into the disorders and provide statistical information. These references will be provided in the columns as appropriate.

Mood Disorders –this group is probably the most familiar group of disorders in the United States. This group includes Major Depressive Disorder, Dysthymic Disorder, Depressive Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (NOS), Bipolar Disorder, Cyclothymic Disorder, Bipolar Disorder NOS, and Mood Disorder due to general medical condition, Substance-Induced Mood Disorder, and Mood Disorder NOS. Each of these disorders is evaluated based on mood episodes and may have multiple features. According to Mental Health America's website, www.mha.org, there are four basic forms of mood disorders – major depression, cyclothymia(a mild form of bipolar

disorder), seasonal affective disorder (SAD), and mania (euphoric, hyperactive, over inflated ego, and unrealistic optimism). About 20% of the U.S. population reports at least one depressive symptom in a given month, and 12% report two or more in a year. The National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov, reports that approximately 20.9 million American Adults, or about 9.5 percent of the U.S. population age 18 or older in a given year, have a mood disorder.

Anxiety Disorders – this group is probably the second most familiar group of disorders. This group includes Panic Disorder Without Agoraphobia (a condition where the sufferer becomes anxious in environments that are unfamiliar or where he or she perceives that they have little control, Wikipedia.org), Panic Disorder With Agoraphobia, Agoraphobia without history of Panic Disorder, Specific Phobia, Social Phobia (Social Anxiety Disorder), Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, Acute Stress Disorder, Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Anxiety Disorder due to a general medical condition, Substance-Induced Anxiety Disorder, and Anxiety Disorder NOS. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), www.nimh.nih.gov, there are five major types of anxiety disorders – Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Panic Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and Social Phobia (or Social Anxiety Disorder). Approximately 40 million American adults ages 18 and older, or about 18.1 percent of people in this age group in a given year, have an anxiety disorder.

Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders – this group of disorders affects a small percentage of the U.S. adult population and most people know very little about these disorders. This

group includes subtypes of schizophrenia – Paranoid, Disorganized, Catatonic, Undifferentiated, and Residual; Schizophreniform Disorder, Schizoaffective Disorder, Delusional Disorder, Brief Psychotic Disorder, Psychotic Disorder due to a General Medical Condition, Substance-Induced Psychotic Disorder and Psychotic Disorder NOS. NIMH reports approximately 2.4 million American adults, or about 1.1 percent of the population age 18 and older in a given year, have schizophrenia.

Personality Disorders – this group of disorders represents “an enduring pattern of inner experience and behavior that deviates markedly from the expectations of the culture of the individual who exhibits it.” It is estimated that 9.1% of American adults ages 18 and over have a diagnosable personality disorder (www.nimh.nih.gov). This group includes Paranoid Personality Disorder, Schizoid Personality Disorder, Schizotypal Personality Disorder, Antisocial Personality Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, Histrionic Personality Disorder, Narcissistic Personality Disorder, Avoidant Personality Disorder, Dependent Personality Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Personality Disorder, and Personality Disorder NOS.

There are many other mental health disorders listed in the DSM-IV but I plan to focus on these four groups in this educational series. As you can see from the list above this will be a challenge. My next column will focus on Mood Disorders.

Please remember to participate in the events of Mental Illness Awareness Week. October 7, 2010 is National Depression Screening Day (NDSD). The Mental Health Association (MHA) will be providing access to online

screening tools. There will be three screening tools available – Military, College and Community. The office will be open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Please feel free to stop by and bring a friend or family member.

The MHA will be holding its ninth semiannual clothing sale October 22 through October 24 at Beth Israel Synagogue. The price for all items is \$1.00. The proceeds from this sale will help to continue the MHA's mission of mental health education and advocacy.

By Shem Heller, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of Lebanon County