

MENTAL HEALTH

WE NEED TO DEFINE OUR TERMS



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WHAT IS HEALTH?

- The most common definition of *health* is the one formalized by the World Health Organization (WHO) which reads:
“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”



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What is Mental Health?

- The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) defines mental health as:
- “the capacity of each and all of us to feel, think and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face. It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity.”



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Health: Physical and Metaphysical

- For our purposes: when considering mental health, our understanding includes and incorporates the spiritual health of the person along with the physical, mental and social aspects of wellness.



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What Does Mental Health Do?

- Mental health influences how we think and feel about ourselves, others and the world around us.
- It effects how we interpret life events
- Mental health enables us to manage the difficulties and challenges of life and can mitigate the possibility of developing mental health problems or disorders
- Even when a person develops a mental health problem or disorder, they can still experience mental health...and that health can lead them back to fuller mental health.



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Distinctions: Mental Disorder/Mental Health Problem

- A mental health disorder causes major changes in:
- A person's thinking
- Emotional state
- Behaviour
- The ability to work and to manage personal relationships
- *** there are specific diagnostic tests used to determine whether or not a person meets the criteria for diagnosis of a mental disorder



Continued...

- A mental health problem is a broader term which includes:
- Both mental disorders and symptoms of mental disorders
- Symptoms may not be severe enough for a mental disorder diagnosis
- Mental health problems can cause challenges in thinking, emotional state and behaviour
- Can disrupt the ability to work and maintain personal relationships
- ***with mental health problems, the symptoms are not static and they can improve or worsen over time



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Life Events...The Good the Bad and the Ugly

- Life events: losses and stressors can be both positive or negative
- Negative: job loss, death of a loved one, divorce, loss of health, etc
- Positive: new job, birth/adoption of a child, marriage, etc
- These can become a mental disorder when the length, intensity or effect they have on the person's life are considerable and prolonged



“Just the facts, Ma'am”

- In Canada, one person in five will experience some problem with their mental health each year
- Two most common mental health problems are depression and anxiety
- Schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are less common



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Facts cont'd

- Mood Disorder Society of Canada:
 - 1. Highest rate of suicide among any age group – men over 80
 - 2. Number of children/youth at any time with mental illness: 15%
 - 3. Percentage of preschoolers with significant depression: 15%
 - 4. Highest per capita users of psychiatric medications: Canada
 - 5. Annual losses to the Canadian economy: \$33 billion annually
 - 6. Cost of hospitalization per person: \$170,820 annually



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Stigma Connected With Mental Health Problems...

- Table talk: with the person on your left, discuss the language we use or hear from colleagues, in movies, cartoons, music regarding mental health problems...
- Share at table as a whole, some of the terms discussed in the pair share...



Myths and Mental Health

- Violence
- Contagious
- Weak willed
- Hereditary
- Gender or race identified
- Faking it



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Prejudice – Barrier to Seeking Treatment

- Stigma – Myth – Prejudice – The Perfect Storm
- Exclusion
- Internalization
- Discrimination



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Stop Look Listen

- Table talk – in pairs – what signs have you seen in colleagues which led you to consider that they may be experiencing a mental health problem
- Share with the table as a whole
- Any similarities in your observations...



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There Ain't No Cure For the Summertime Blues

- If it walks like a duck...
- Sh** happens...
- If a pattern continues for a prolonged period – may indicate an underlying mental health problem



Merton

- “The whole world is secretly on fire. The stones burn, even the stones...how can one be still or listen to all things burning?”



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