

What is Really Mental Illness All About

1. Introduction

Mental health refers to cognitive, behavioral, and emotional well-being. It is all about how people think, feel, and behave. People sometimes use the term “mental health” to mean the absence of a mental disorder.

Well-known mental health conditions such as stress, depression, and anxiety can all affect mental health and disrupt a person’s routine.

In this article, we explain what people mean by mental health and mental illness. We also describe the most common types of mental disorders, including their early signs and how to treat them.

These are types of mental illnesses that are very rare and not well known.

2. Clinical Lycanthropy

Clinical lycanthropy involves a delusion that the affected person can transform into an animal. It is often associated with turning into a wolf or werewolf, the name of the syndrome originates from the mythical condition of lycanthropy or shapeshifting into wolves.

People with clinical lycanthropy believe that they can take the form of any particular animal. During this delusion or hallucination, affected individuals can act like the animal. For instance, people may act like wolves and be found in forests and wooded areas. The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences labels clinical lycanthropy is a type of delusional misidentification syndrome.

3. Depersonalization/Derealization Disorder

The separation from oneself, one's surroundings, or both describe the altered state of depersonalisation/derealisation disorder. Patients who have this disorder feel they are observing themselves from outside their own bodies. They may also believe that things are not real, as though their surroundings are distorted or time is speeding up or slowing down.

One or both of these tendencies can lead to depersonalisation/derealisation disorder. Symptoms must be

persistent to qualify for a diagnosis because, according to Psychology Today, it is normal to feel this way briefly due to side effects of medication, recreational drugs, or some other physical or mental health condition.

4. Diogenes Syndrome

The compulsive hoarding of rubbish and seemingly random items is the main feature of Diogenes Syndrome, which is found mainly in the elderly and is associated with progressive dementia. Other characteristics include extreme self-neglect, apathy, social withdrawal, and a lack of shame.

The syndrome is a misnomer, as it is named after the Greek philosopher Diogenes of Sinope. Diogenes was a Cynic who, according to the philosophy he co-founded, rejected the desire for wealth, power, and fame, choosing to live free from all possessions. He found virtue in poverty, slept in a large ceramic jar, and sought social interaction.

5. Stendhal Syndrome

Those with Stendhal syndrome experience physical and emotional anxiety as well as panic attacks, dissociative experiences, confusion, and hallucinations when exposed to art. These symptoms are usually triggered by “art that is perceived as particularly beautiful or when the individual is exposed to large quantities of art that are concentrated in a single place”, such as a museum or gallery, according to Medscape. However, individuals

may experience similar reactions to beauty in nature. This syndrome is named after a 19th-century French author who experienced the symptoms during a trip to Florence in 1817. Stendhal syndrome may also be called hyperchloremia or Florence syndrome.

6. Alien Hand Syndrome

This syndrome is characterised by the belief that one's hand has its own life and doesn't belong to oneself. Individuals experiencing alien hand syndrome have normal sensations but feel their hand is autonomous. Those with alien hand syndrome may personify the limb as a separate entity. The unaffected hand is under the individual's control while the affected hand has its own agenda. This syndrome may occur in individuals who have damage to the corpus callosum, which connects the two cerebral hemispheres of the brain. Other causes include stroke and damage to the parietal lobe. The hands then appear to be in "inter-manual conflict" or "ideomotor apraxia," meaning they act in opposition to one another.

7. Capgras Syndrome

This syndrome is named for Joseph Capgras, a French psychiatrist who explored the illusion of doubles. Those with Capgras syndrome hold the delusional belief that someone in their life, usually a spouse, close friend, or family member, has been replaced by an impostor. It can occur in patients with schizophrenia, dementia, or epilepsy and after traumatic brain injury. Treatment includes antipsychotic medications.

8. Alice in Wonderland Syndrome

Also known as Todd syndrome, Alice in Wonderland syndrome (AIWS) is a neurological condition in which one's perception of their body image, time, or space is distorted. Those experiencing AIWS may have hallucinations, sensory distortion, and an altered sense of velocity. Though there are many symptoms, the most prevalent one is altered body image. Patients are confused about the size and shape of parts of their bodies. These symptoms can trigger panic and fear responses. AIWS is often associated with frequent migraines, brain tumors, or drug use and can affect children between the ages of five and 10.

9. Khyâl Cap

Khyâl cap or “wind attacks” syndrome symptoms are similar to those of panic attacks, including dizziness, palpitations, shortness of breath, and cold extremities, along with symptoms of anxiety and autonomic arousals, such as tinnitus and neck soreness (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-V)).

These attacks are centered on khyâl, a wind-like substance, rising in the body and the blood, causing a range of serious effects. They may occur without warning, and these attacks usually meet the criteria for panic attacks. A study in cultures, medicine, and psychiatry found that some Cambodian refugees with posttraumatic stress disorder often complain of these attacks. It involves a great fear that death might occur from bodily dysfunction.

Khyâl cap is an example of a cultural syndrome or a syndrome that tends to co-occur among individuals in specific cultural groups, communities, or contexts.

10. Kufungisisa

Another cultural syndrome in the DSM-5 is Kufungisisa, or “thinking too much.”.

In many cultures, “thinking too much” is considered to be damaging to the mind and body, causing specific symptoms like headaches and dizziness. Kufungisisa involves ruminating on upsetting thoughts, particularly worries. As a cultural expression, it is considered to be causative to anxiety, depression, and somatic problems (e.g., “my heart is painful because I think too much”). As an idiom, it is indicative of interpersonal and social difficulties.

“Thinking too much” is a common idiom of distress and cultural explanation across many countries and ethnic groups, including Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America, and among East Asian and Native American groups.

11. Conclusion

Mental health can affect daily living, relationships, and even physical health. Factors in people’s lives, interpersonal connections, and physical factors can all contribute to mental health disruptions.

Although the term mental health is in common use, many conditions that doctors recognise as psychological disorders have physical roots.

Looking after someone's mental health can preserve a person's ability to enjoy life. Doing this involves reaching a balance between life activities, responsibilities, and efforts to achieve psychological resilience.

12. References

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2. <https://www.medscape.com>
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