



For the Lifespan: The Caregiver Guide

Module 6

Caring for Those with Depression, Anxiety, Stress, and Other Mental Health Issues



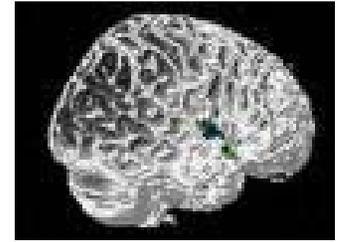
Objectives

After completing this module, you will be able to:

- List basic facts about mental illness and recovery.
- Identify stages of emotional reactions among family members.
- Identify community resources that provide support to families, caregivers, and individuals with mental illness.
- Describe a specific action that you will take in the following week to take care of yourself.



Mental Illness



- Mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others, and/or daily functioning. These medical conditions typically result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.



Facts About Mental Illness

- Mental illnesses cannot be overcome through will power and are not related to a person's character or intelligence.
- Mental illnesses can strike individuals in the prime of their lives, often during adolescence and young adulthood.
- All ages are susceptible, but the young and the old are especially vulnerable.
- Without treatment, the consequences of mental illness for the individual and society include: unnecessary disability, unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness, inappropriate incarceration, and suicide.
- The economic cost of untreated mental illness is more than \$100 billion each year in the United States.
 - *(Adapted from the National Alliance on Mental Illness)*

Feelings and Stages of Reactions

Common Feelings:

- Guilt/Shame
- Fear
- Anger/Frustration
- Sadness

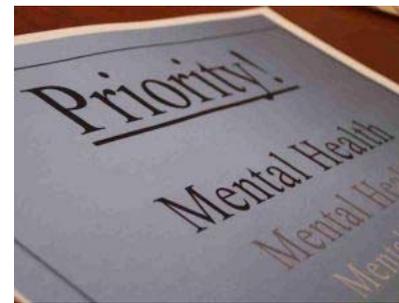


Stages of Reactions:

- Stage 1: Being in Crisis
- Stage 2: Learning to Cope
- Stage 3: Moving Toward Acceptance

Understanding the Illness

- What are the characteristics of the illness?
- Talk to physicians and mental health professionals.
- Keep a diary of problems or symptoms.
- What are the warning signs of a relapse?



What are Treatment Options?



- Medication
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Counseling
- Group Therapy
- Self-Help Approaches
- Stress Management
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
website: www.nimh.nih.gov
- National Alliance for Mental Illness (NAMI)
website: www.nami.org



Medications and Side Effects

- Ask a doctor or pharmacist for help.
- Write down the medicine's name; what it is for; how long it needs to be taken; what happens if a dose is missed; what to do if side effects arise; how it could interfere with other medications including over-the-counter and herbal supplements; how it could affect any other illnesses; what should be avoided; and the cheapest brand.



Understanding the Mental Health System

- Talk to your primary care doctor for a referral to a mental health professional (if the care recipient doesn't have one).
- Know your insurance options for treatment.
- Find out what the county mental health system offers.
- Identify local professional and community support services.



Fostering Communication

- Try to have an open posture, without crossing your arms, pointing, putting your hands on your hips, or waving, which may appear aggressive or confrontational.
- Try not to raise or lower your voice.
- Don't interrupt or finish sentences.
- Don't argue with any delusions, change the subject.
- Share feelings in a non-confrontational way.



Problem Behaviors



- A person with mental illness is still responsible for his or her actions.
- You might need to agree on what is and is not acceptable behavior.
- Discuss with a professional which behaviors to expect and which need to be accepted.
- Discuss the situation. Work together on a solution. If it is not working, talk to a doctor, manager, or counselor about what to do.

Empower the Person

- Relate to the person as an individual, not just in terms of the illness.
- Include the person in decisions about treatment, if possible.
- Recognize the difficulty of the situation.
- Acknowledge the person's strength and abilities to face the situation to minimize feelings of powerlessness.





Self-Care Checklist

- Do I have someone I trust to talk to about my experience?
- Do I get enough breaks from caring?
- Have I got regular times for relaxation?
- Am I getting regular exercise?
- Am I eating regular nutritious meals?
- Do I get enough sleep?



Taking Care of Yourself

- Taking Breaks – You must recognize your limits. You need a break sometimes.
- Health – Try to get regular exercise, get enough sleep, reduce stress, keep your sense of humor, and eat a healthy diet.
- Relax – Listen to music you enjoy, do yoga, meditate, or read.





Support

- Find someone who is non-judgmental that you can talk to about what is really going on.
- Sharing experiences can give you comfort and strength. Do NOT become isolated.
- Local support groups are often available.
 - Check with NAMI Utah.
 - Local Center for Independent Living.
 - 211.

Planning

- Makes things more manageable.
- Figure out a day-to-day routine.
 - It helps to add structure, such as regular meal-times.
 - Introduce gradual changes.
 - Include time for yourself.
 - Include the person.





Planning Ahead



- Make sure that you have a plan of action in case of an emergency.
- Keep an up-to-date list of medications.
- Find someone who can step in on short notice.
- Note behavior/health changes and get assistance fast.

Serious Concerns

- If health or behavior deteriorates, get help as soon as possible. Symptoms to watch for include:
 - hallucinations,
 - withdrawal,
 - severe mood swings,
 - religious obsessions,
 - delusions, and
 - excessive alcohol and drug use.



Suicide

- Take talking about suicide, or signs of suicidal behavior seriously. Ask the person directly if they are suicidal. Say you want to get help and do it immediately. Signs:
 - Talking about suicide.
 - Feeling hopeless or worthless.
 - Giving away belongings.
 - Risk taking.
 - Withdrawing.
 - Saying goodbye and tying up affairs.
 - Suddenly feeling happy or at peace.



Recovery



- The best treatments for serious mental illnesses today are highly effective.
- Yet, treatment is not a “cure” and symptoms can come and go in cycles.
- Between 70 and 90% of individuals have significant reduction of symptoms and improved quality of life with a combination of medication and psychosocial treatment and supports.
- Recovery may be accelerated with early treatment and protect the brain from harm.

Community Resources - NAMI

- Community resources provide support to families and individuals with mental illness.
- NAMI has a free 10-week course for consumers, a 3-6 week Basics Education Class, and a 12-week Family-to-Family Education Program.
- NAMI also offers support groups and more.
- www.Namiut.org or 801-323-9900.



Mental Health America



- Mental Health America is a non-profit dedicated to helping all people live healthier lives, with 240 affiliates nationwide. Their website provides information on mental health.
- 800-969-6642 or 1-800-273-8255.
- www.mentalhealthamerica.net/go/home.

National Institute of Mental Health

- The NIMH works to improve mental health through biomedical research on mind, brain, and behavior. Their website offers extensive information on mental health.
- Website: www.nimh.nih.gov.
- E-mail address: nimhinfo@nih.gov.
- Phone: 1-866-615-6464 (toll-free).



SAMHSA



- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
- SAMHSA is within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and helps people with mental health and substance use disorders, supports their families, prevents costly behavioral health problems, and promotes better health.
- Helpline: 800-662-4357, Phone: 1-877-726-4727, Publications: 1-877-726-4727.
- <http://www.samhsa.gov/prevention>.

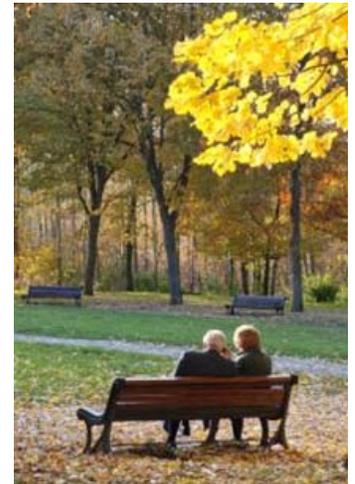
Summary



- Caring for someone with a mental illness can be difficult and frustrating, but it can also be rewarding.
- Don't get discouraged or give up.
- Try the tips mentioned in this training.
- Use all the resources available to you.
- Connect with professionals and support groups.
- Don't forget to care for yourself.

Take a Break – Today I Will:

- Take a walk outdoors or go to the gym
- Read or watch something I like
- Write in a journal or to friends or family
- Take a hot bath or shower
- Read the comics or a funny book
- Call a friend or family member
- Meditate or pray
- Use respite services
- Talk to a friend, family, or therapist
- Have lunch with friends or family



Things to Remember

- Remember to take good care of yourself by staying positive, exercising regularly, getting enough rest, eating nutritiously, using good body mechanics, keeping a sense of humor, relaxing and doing some things you enjoy when you can.
- Always believe in yourself and your abilities.
- Remember that you have the strength, courage, compassion, and wisdom to succeed.
- Thanks for your participation.

