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THINK BIG 2017

DVR INTERACTIVE STATIONS

Disability Overview

Mental Illness

Mental illness is a term that describes a broad range of mental and emotional conditions. The term 'psychiatric disability' is used when mental illness significantly interferes with the performance of major life activities, such as learning, working and communicating, among others.

Someone can experience a mental illness over many years. The type, intensity and duration of symptoms vary from person to person. They come and go and do not always follow a regular pattern, making it difficult to predict when symptoms and functioning will flare-up, even if treatment recommendations are followed. The symptoms of mental illness often are effectively controlled through medication and/or psychotherapy, and may even go into remission. For

some people, the illness continues to cause periodic episodes that require treatment. Consequently, some people with mental illness will need no support, others may need only occasional support, and still others may require more substantial, ongoing support to maintain their productivity.

The most common forms of mental illness are anxiety disorders, mood disorder and schizophrenia disorders.

Anxiety Disorders

Anxiety disorders are a group of mental disorders characterized by significant feelings of anxiety and fear. Anxiety is a worry about future events and fear is a reaction to current events. These feelings may cause physical symptoms, such as a fast

heart rate and shakiness.

Mood Disorders

a psychological disorder characterized by the elevation or lowering of a person's mood, such as depression or bipolar disorder.

Schizophrenia Disorders

a long-term mental disorder of a type involving a breakdown in the relation between thought, emotion, and behavior, leading to faulty perception, inappropriate actions and feelings, withdrawal from reality and personal relationships into fantasy and delusion, and a sense of mental fragmentation.

Vocational Challenges

1. Interpersonal skills
2. Self Direction
3. Stamina
4. Understanding instructions
5. Form Perception
6. Spatial Perception
7. Memory
8. Problem Solving
9. Flexibility
10. Adapting to change
11. Motor coordination (depending on medication side effects)
12. Learning new job tasks
13. Difficulty communicating with others
14. Blunted emotional responses
15. Self-image
16. Inability to focus on details
17. Relational distortions
18. Co-occurring substance abuse disorder may cause other issues

Considerations for Successfully Working Together

- Be respectful to the person. When someone feels respected and heard, they are more likely to return respect and consider what you have to say.
- If they are experiencing events like hallucinations, be aware that the hallucinations or the delusions they experience are their reality. You will not be able to talk them out of their reality. They experience the hallucinations or delusional thoughts as real and are motivated by them. Communicate that you understand that they experience those events. Do not pretend that you experience them.
- Some people with paranoia may be frightened, so be aware that they may need more body space than you.
- Do not assume that they are not smart and will believe anything you tell them.
- Mental illness has nothing to do with the person's intelligence level. Do not lie to them, as it will usually break any rapport you might want to establish.
- Do not just pass them on to another person like a "hot potato" just to get rid of them. This may save you time in the short run, but may come back to haunt you later, or cause problems for someone else. Anyone who is passed unnecessarily from one person to another can become angry or violent. Refer them to someone else only if it is an appropriate referral.
- Listen to the person and try to understand what he/she is communicating. Often, if you do not turn off your communicating skills, you will be able to understand. Find out what reality based needs you can meet.

Resources

Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners

Rocky Mountain Crisis Partners (RMCP) is a statewide, 24/7, year-round, community-based system of crisis intervention services from which people experiencing mental health and/or substance abuse crises can be assessed, safely and effectively stabilized, and efficiently linked to appropriate follow-up care and services.

1-844-493-8255

SAMSHA—Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

5600 Fishers Ln • Rockville, MD 20857
1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

NAMI—National Alliance of Mental Illness

800-950-6264

NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.