

## INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHIATRIC NURSING

### **Learning objectives**

After studying this chapter, the student should be able to:

1. Define psychiatric nursing
2. Define common psychiatric symptoms and key terms in psychiatry
3. Describe normality
4. Describe mental illness
5. List the major criteria for the diagnosis of psychosis
6. Recognize the history and trends in psychiatric nursing
7. Describe general anxiety disorders and its sub classifications (clinical manifestations, differential diagnosis, diagnosis, treatment prognosis and complications)
8. List the sub-classifications of mental illness

### **Definition**

**Psychiatric nursing** is the branch of nursing concerned with the prevention and cure of mental disorders and their sequel. It employs

theories of human behavior as its scientific frameworks and requires the use of self as its art or expression in nursing practice.

Common psychiatric symptoms and key terms in psychiatric nursing

1. Anxiety: A state of feeling uncertainty experienced in response to an object or situation.
2. Stress: A state of extreme difficulty, pressure or strain with negative effects on physical and emotional health and well-being.

3. Withdrawal: A state of habitual quiet and seeming un concerned with other people a focus on one's own thoughts. 4. Depression: A mood state characterized by a feeling of sadness, dejection (self dislike), despair, discouragement, or hopelessness.

5. Suicide: The act of killing oneself (self distracting behavior)

6. Neurosis: A condition in which mal adaptive behaviors serves as a protection against a source of unconscious anxiety.

7. Personality disorder: A non psychotic illness characterized by maladaptive behavior that the person uses to fulfill his or her needs and bring satisfaction to him or her self. As a result of the inability to relate to the environment, the person's actions conflicts socially

8. Hysteria (conversion disorder): The loss or impairment of some motor or sensory function for which there is no organic cause. Formerly known as hysteria or hysterical neurosis.

9. Mental retardation: A disorder characterized by sub average intellectual functioning associated with or resulting in, the inability or impairment of the ability to think abstractly, adapt to new situations, learn new information, solve problem, or profit from experience.

10. Dementia: A diffuse brain dysfunction characterized by a gradual, progressive, and chronic deterioration of intellectual function. Judgment, orientation, memory, affect or emotional stability, cognition, and attention all are affected.

11. Trauma: A severe physical injury to the body from an external source; or a severe psychological shock.

12. Alcohol dependent: A person who can not break the habit of drinking alcoholic drinks too much, especially one whose health is damaged because of excessive alcohol intake.

13. Schizophrenia: A serious mental disorder characterized by impaired communication with loss of contact with reality and deterioration from a previous level of functioning in work, social relationships, or self care.

14. Paranoid disorder: A psychotic state characterized by moderately, or seriously, impaired reality testing, affect and sociability, accompanied by persecutory, grandiose, erotic or jealous content delusions.

15. Manic-depression: A mood disorder involving both mania and depressive episode.

16. Illusion: A false interpretation or perception of a real environmental stimulus that may involve any of the senses.

17. Hallucinations: Sensory perceptions that occur in the absence of an actual external stimulus. They may be auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory or tactile.

18. Delusion: False belief not true to fact ordinarily accepted by other members of the person's culture

# Normality

## **What is normality?**

It is often said that we are all 'a bit abnormal' is this true or nonsense? This question may be easier if the word 'normal' replaced by 'healthy' but the question remains whether it is normal to be a little unhealthy.

The difficulty which arises in answering these questions lies in the fact that 'normal' is used in more than one sense. It is sometimes employed for always or 'most usual' for example when considering normal height, normal weight and so on. In this sense, with regard to mental health, normality may be:

- A sense of well-being
- The use of sublimation as the main defense mechanism
- The ability to postpone present pleasures for future ones
- The presence of an intact sense of reality
- Good interpersonal relationship
- Optimal adjustment.

## **The activities of normal life in adults**

Broadly speaking normal life, amongst other things involves the following activities:

- Adaptation to the work situation
- Leisure time activity
- Management of social contacts
- Adjustment to the opposite sex.

## **Mental health**

It is difficult to define the idea of mental health without reference to society. It could be said that a person is healthy if he/she manages to deal with the demands made upon him/her by society in a way that is compatible with his/her idea both of society and of him/her self. He/she is ill to the degree that has failed in his/her adjustment to the demands either of society or his definition of him/her self.

This definition is not entirely satisfactory. There are those who deviate from the norms of society who are not mentally ill and the definition also gives rise to the impression that psychiatrists and psychiatric nurses are committed to maintain the status quo and preventing social change.

### **Mental illness**

The definition of mental illness remains elusive and is usually based up on what constitutes socially accepted behavior norms. For example behavior that is normal in one culture may be considered abnormal in another culture.

### **Major criteria for the diagnosis of mental illness (Psychosis)**

The criteria for psychosis include:

1. Bizarre behavior
2. Abnormal experience
3. Loss of reality contact
4. Lack of insight

Comparative characteristics of a mentally healthy and a mentally ill person

MENTAL HEALTH	MENTAL ILLNESS
1. Accepts self and others	1. - Feelings of inadequacy - Poor self-concept
2. Ability to cope or tolerate stress. Can return to normal functioning if temporarily disturbed	2. - Inability to cope - Maladaptive behavior
3. Ability to form close and lasting relationships	3. Inability to establish a meaningful relationship

4. Uses sound judgment to make decisions	4. Displays poor judgment
5. Accepts responsibility for actions	5. Irresponsibility or inability to accept responsibility for actions
6. Optimistic	6. Pessimistic
7. Recognizes limitations (abilities and deficiencies)	7. Does not recognize limitations (abilities and deficiencies)
8. Can function effectively and independently	8. Exhibits dependency needs because of feelings of inadequacy
9. Able to perceive imagined circumstances from reality	9. Inability to perceive reality
10. Able to develop potential and talents to fullest extent	10. Does not recognize potential and talents due to a poor self-concept
11. Able to solve problems	11. Avoids problems rather than handling them or attempting to solve them
12. Can delay immediate gratification	12. Desires or demands immediate gratification
13. Mental health reflects a person's approach to life by communicating emotions, giving and receiving. Working alone as well as with other, accepting authority, displaying a sense of humor, and coping successfully with emotional conflict.	13. Mental illness reflects a person's inability to cope with stress, resulting in disruption, disorganization, inappropriate reactions, unacceptable behavior and the inability to respond according to his expectations and the demands of society.

People who are mentally healthy do not necessarily possess all the characteristics of mental health listed. Under stress they may exhibit some of the traits of mental illness but are able to respond to the

stress with automatic, unconscious behavior that serves to satisfy their basic needs in a socially acceptable way.