

1: WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Time:	45 min.
Format:	Lecture, video, discussion
Materials:	PowerPoint, Video: "Meet Kim," flip chart and markers
Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize that mental health includes multiple dimensions, such as emotional, psychological, and social aspects.• Describe and compare criteria for defining a mental disorder versus serious mental illness.

Description

This is a foundational module that emphasizes the importance of attention to mental health and its complexities. With an animated story, participants will use criteria to determine the overall mental health of a justice-vulnerable character.

During Training

Mental Health



Set Up

Introduce the topic by using the following question to facilitate discussion:

- What does "mental health" mean to you?
(NOTE: Write responses on flip chart.)

Present lecture:



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Mental health is more than mood. It's a complex state, as you might guess. Mental health is a term used to describe our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Positive mental health helps people to cope with stress, make meaningful contributions to their communities, and realize their own personal potential (MentalHealth.gov, 2016).

Mental health is an important part of overall health. A healthy life is complex because it is the sum total of all of the dimensions of our lives.

One way to evaluate mental health is to consider three elements:

- The first is **Emotional**. The most obvious component of mental health is a person's emotional state, their feelings. Of course, every day or week has its ups and downs, but what is the most common emotional tone of a person's life? Are they generally content with their life? Or are they sad a lot? Have they recently experienced a loss? Are they handling stress well? What kind of support do they have? Describing a person's emotional life is the first step to getting a sense of their mental health.



- What are some examples of better or worse emotional health?

- The second element is **Social**. Having a satisfying social life is important to good mental health; this aspect is determined by the kinds of interactions a person has with other people. Everyone is different: some people prefer a large circle of friends while others are content with a few very close friends. It's important to assess the quality of social relationships a person has and whether these are what the person desires. This can include family, friends, and romantic partners. Are the person's relationships fundamentally positive? Are some destructive?



Correctional Mental Health

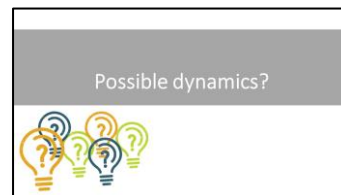
- What are some examples of better or worse social health? How might they affect mental health?
- The third element is **Psychological**. While emotional state is about feelings, the psychological state is about thinking and thought patterns. The way a person frames their own experience can have a big impact on how they experience life. It may be difficult to assess this aspect of experience, so observers can take their clues from emotions and social behaviors.
 - How do attitude and thought patterns affect the way that a person experiences the world?
- Also note that **Physical** health can have an impact on mental health. The body's health is connected to mental health. Physical pain or physical comfort can lower or improve a person's mental health. When assessing mental health, don't overlook physical health. And remember that disability isn't necessarily a negative factor.
 - What are some examples of better or worse physical health, and how might those affect mental health?



Discussion

Lead a brief discussion of possible dynamics of mental health with the following questions:

- Mental health can be complex. What happens if a person has good health in one area and not another?
- What might it look like when someone has better emotional and social health but worse physical health?



- What might it look like when someone has strong physical health but worse social and emotional health?
- How can strong psychological health affect emotional and social health?

Transition by saying:

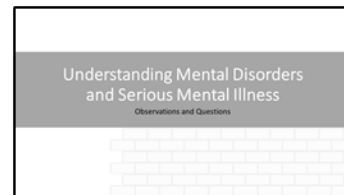
Beyond basic mental health, let's begin to learn more about mental disorders and mental illness.

Understanding Mental Disorders and Serious Mental Illness

Lecture

Present lecture:

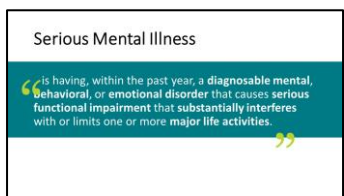
How serious is "serious" when we talk about issues with mental health?



Let's define "**mental disorders.**" Mental disorders (sometimes called mental illness) involve changes in thinking, mood, and/or behavior. Mental disorders are common; they affect people from all age groups and parts of society, and they can affect social relationships and the ability to make decisions. Mental disorders can be persistent or intermittent, and different types of mental disorders have different average ages of onset (SAMHSA, 2016).



By contrast, what is a "**serious mental illness?**" A mental disorder is considered "serious" or not serious by analyzing the individual's ability to function in society. Many adults with mental disorders are able to function in society without major difficulties.



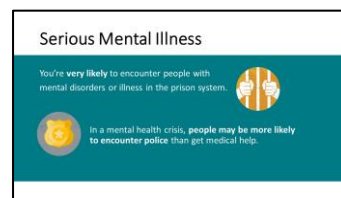
In contrast, serious mental illness among adults is defined as having, within the past year, a diagnosable

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mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder that causes serious functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities. That is, the individual may have substantial difficulty accomplishing the things they need or want to do on a daily basis, such as working, maintaining social relationships, engaging in leisure activities, and caring for him/herself.

Serious mental illness includes major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and other disorders that cause serious functional impairment (e.g., schizophrenia spectrum, psychotic disorders; SAMHSA, 2016).

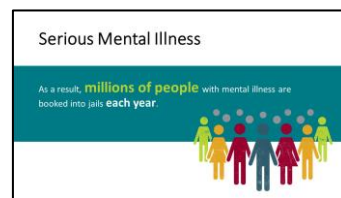
As a correctional officer, you're likely to encounter people with mental disorders or mental illness in the correctional system. In a mental health crisis, people may be more likely to encounter police than to seek out medical help.



Accordingly, millions of people with mental illness cycle through correctional facilities each year.

Transition by saying:

Let's try out what we've learned by thinking about a specific example. Let's meet Kim, see who she is, and discuss how she's doing.



Understanding Mental Health

Video: "Meet Kim"

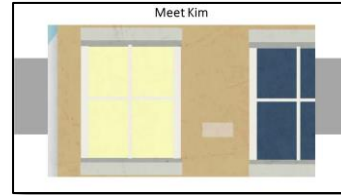
Introduce the video by saying:

Watch Kim's story and note elements of her emotional, social, psychological, and physical health. Ask yourself, how do those elements come together in her life?

We'll discuss your findings together after the video.

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Play the video "Meet Kim."



Facilitate discussion by asking the following questions. Write participants' answers on the flip chart. Make sure to ask for examples that illustrate their findings.



- How is Kim's social health?
- How is Kim's emotional health?
- How is Kim's psychological health?
- How is Kim's physical health?
- Overall, how do you think Kim is doing?
- Kim can be anxious sometimes. How much does that seem to affect her life overall?
- Is there anything that might concern you for her future? What are some strengths you see?

Make sure these key points have been made:

- Kim has a challenging family life and is anxious.
- But her strong friendships and good physical health due to a sport she enjoys support her.

Pulling It All Together

Discussion

Facilitate concluding discussion and module wrap-up with the following questions:

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- How much of today's information on mental health and mental illness was new to you?
- Have you ever had contact with an incarcerated person who you think may have had a serious mental illness, even if you don't know what it might have been?



Conclude with:

- As you move through your workday, you can start to think about the mental health of those around you by thinking about their dimensions of mental health: social, emotional, and psychological.



SOURCES

Module 1

Andrews, G., Kemp, A., Sunderland, M., Von Korff, M., and Usten, T. (2009). *Normative data for the 12-item WHO Disability Assessment Schedule 2.0*. *PLoS ONE*, 4(12), 1-6.

MentalHealth.gov (2016). What is mental health? Retrieved 7/15/2016 from <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/what-is-mental-health/> .

SAMHSA (2016). Mental and substance use disorders. Retrieved 7/15/2016 from <http://www.samhsa.gov/disorders>.