

8: MENTAL DISORDERS AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS

Time:	45 min.
Format:	Lecture, video, discussion
Materials:	PowerPoint, Handout: "Common Mental Disorders and their Symptoms," Video: "Rena Changes," flip chart and markers
Competencies:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognize basic signs and symptoms of common mental disorders.• Recognize that mental disorders have genetic, environmental, and lifestyle causes.• Understand the rights of people with mental disorders to treatment and to self-determination, as balanced with the safety needs of the individual and others.

Description

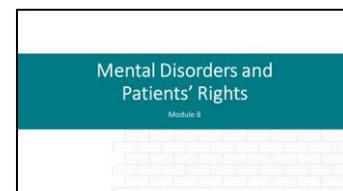
The module will orient participants to common mental health diagnoses and touch on the basic rights of persons with mental illness. An animated, context-based, character-centered video will help them observe an example of what to look for.

Before Training

Print out enough copies of the handout "Common Mental Disorders and their Symptoms" for every participant to have a copy.

During Training

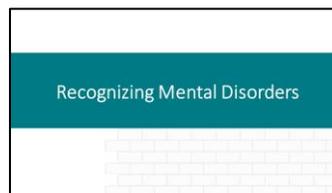
Recognizing Mental Disorders



Set Up

Begin the topic with the following:

Right now, our society talks more about mental disorders than we ever have before, but that doesn't mean we all have an accurate understanding of the most common disorders. Demystifying mental disorders helps the population at large. Let's get more detail now.



Give out copies of the handout "Common Mental Disorders and their Symptoms."

Tell them to look over the handout for a few minutes. Then ask questions such as, "What surprised you?" "What do you think is most relevant to your job?" "What questions do you have?"

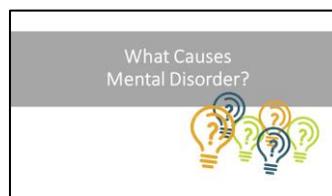
What Causes Mental Disorders?

Lecture

Present lecture:

What can cause mental disorders?

- **Genetics.** It appears that some mental disorders may have a strong genetic component, such as schizophrenia and depression.
- **Environment.** Life experience can affect mental health greatly. Daily stress and trauma can contribute to anxiety, depression, and panic disorders including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Also, if a person has a genetic vulnerability to mental illness, whether it is ever expressed or whether it worsens may be influenced by environmental factors.
- **Lifestyle.** A person's daily choices are important to mental health. Substance abuse can impact



mental health. Addiction and side effects from substance abuse can lead to or increase risk of depression, paranoia, and other issues.

Transition by saying:

Let's have a look at someone who is incarcerated and experiencing a change in mental health.

Video: "Rena Changes"

Play the video "Rena Changes."

Facilitate the discussion with the following questions:

- What alerts you that Rena's mental health status has changed? Give examples.
- Can you tell what may have caused the change? (Hint: It happened after visitation, but she hasn't told anyone what happened so you can't know).
- Do you need to know what Rena found out that caused the change? (Hint: No.)
- What concerns do you think you should be on the alert for? (NOTE: Worsening symptoms, conflict with bunkmates).
- How could you get her help?
- What could be some consequences if she doesn't get formal help? (NOTE: Inappropriate punishment for malingering, worsening symptoms, suicide attempt, impact on family relationships, lawsuit against officer or facility, etc.)



Get Help

Lecture

Say:

It's important to keep current on your workplace's policies on how to respond to individuals with acute mental health issues and what to do if you suspect an incarcerated person may be developing a mental disorder.



How many of you already know those policies? What are some of the most important points? (Discuss). If you don't know the policies well, study that part of your employee manual and ask your supervisor for further information when you arrive at your next shift.

The Power of Mental Illness

Lecture

Present lecture:

Ultimately, severe mental disorders can reduce or compromise a person's free will. The illness may interfere with their ability to take in information. Or the illness may not give them complete control over their actions and decisions.



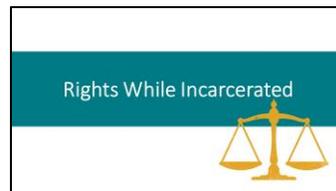
However, mental illness doesn't take away an adult's right to self-determination and support. People with mental disorders have a right to treatment in order to have as much control over their decisions as possible.

Rights While Incarcerated

Lecture

Present lecture:

Incarcerated people with mental disorders have the right to treatment, including ability to access a treatment system in which he or she is seen by a person qualified to diagnose and treat his or her ailments, with timely and appropriate treatment for his or her problems.



Similarly, incarcerated people have the right to be free from intrusions into their autonomy over their own bodies; that is, the individual may refuse treatment. There are some exceptions to this rule when the individual is deemed incompetent or presents a danger to self or to others, but these decisions are driven by mental health and administrative staff with consideration of applicable state and federal laws and regulations (Drapkin, 2009).

Discussion

Ask:

- Do you know how your workplace maintains the rights of those with mental illness?
- What is your role in maintaining their rights while incarcerated? (Hint: follow your workplace's policies carefully).
- At your workplace, who can you go to when you're uncertain about the best response to someone with a mental disorder or illness? (Hint: supervisor, mental health staff).

SOURCES

Module 8

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Correctional Mental Health

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