

Qualities of Mental Health

In the World Health Organization bulletin named “Social Determinants of Mental Health the following is mentioned:

Mental health and many common mental disorders are shaped to a great extent by the social, economic, and physical environments in which people live.

- Social inequalities are associated with increased risk of many common mental disorders.
- Taking action to improve the conditions of daily life from before birth, during early childhood, at school age, during family building and working ages, and at older ages provides opportunities both to improve population mental health and to reduce the risk of those mental disorders that are associated with social inequalities.
- While comprehensive action across the life course is needed, scientific consensus is considerable that giving every child the best possible start will generate the greatest societal and mental health benefits.
- Action needs to be universal: across the whole of society, and proportionate to need in order to level the social gradient in health outcomes.
- This paper highlights effective actions to reduce risk of mental disorders throughout the life course, at the community level and at the country level. It includes environmental, structural, and local interventions. Such actions to prevent mental disorders are likely to promote mental health in the population.

- The following is also brought to our attention in the mentioned World Health Organization article:

- **Mental health and well being**

- There has been growing interest in well-being in recent years among researchers and in public policy. Amartya Sen's capability approach⁸ has been influential in opening up debate around a set of capabilities that enable individuals to do and to be that which they have reasons to value. According to Sen, the range of things which people value doing or being may vary from "elementary ones (such) as being adequately nourished and being free from avoidable disease to very complex activities or personal states, such as being able to take part in the life of the community and having self-respect"
- The political theorist Martha Nussbaum has elaborated the concept of capabilities across the following domains as conditions necessary for mental health including:
 - "not dying prematurely"
 - "being able to have good health"
 - having "bodily integrity"
 - "being able to use the senses
 - to imagine, think, and reason"
 - having freedom of emotional expression
 - practical reasoning enabling "plan- ning of one's life"
 - "affiliation" with others in conditions that engender "self-respect" and "non-discrimination"
 - having concern for "other species",

- “being able to laugh, to play, to enjoy recreational activities”,
 - “being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one’s life”
 - having control over one’s material environment.
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- Mental health is integral to this conceptualization of wellbeing, because it enables people to do and be things they have reason to value. Conversely, being and doing things one has reason to value contributes to mental health. Capabilities to do and to be are shaped by social, economic, and environmental conditions. To illustrate, a woman’s capabilities are severely restricted if she is unable to complete secondary education, is subjected to domestic violence, works for low pay in the informal labour

This from psychologydiscussion.net:

1. A mentally healthy person has an ability to make adjustments.
2. A mentally healthy person has a sense of personal worth, feels worthwhile and important.
3. A mentally healthy person solves his problems largely by her own efforts and makes his own decisions.
4. She has a sense of personal security and feels secure in a group, shows understanding of other people’s problems and motives.
5. A mentally healthy person has a sense of responsibility
6. She can give and accept love.
7. He lives in a world of reality rather than fantasy.
8. She shows emotional maturity in his behaviour, and develops a capacity to tolerate frustration and disappointments in his daily activities.
9. A mentally healthy person has a variety of interests and generally lives a well-balanced life of work, rest and recreation.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-mental-health-2330755>:

The World Health Organization in response to the question “What is Mental Health? states mental health is not just the absence of mental illness.¹

It involves a state of well-being in which people are able to cope with the normal stresses they face in daily life. Mental health allows people to recognize their own abilities, work productively, and make meaningful contributions to their communities

The Who characteristic of mental health are seen as related to the following:

Life Satisfaction

Resilience

Support

Flexibility

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) states that an estimated one in five U.S. adults experiences a mental health problem each year.⁷

National Alliance on Mental Health. [Mental health by the numbers](#). Updated September 2019.

There are a number of risk factors that can increase the likelihood that a person may experience poor mental health.

Risks to mental health can include: ⁸

- Discrimination
- Exposure to trauma
- Family history of mental illness
- Low income
- Medical illness
- Poor access to health services
- Poor self-esteem
- Poor social skills

Common **WARNING SIGNS** of Mental Illness

Diagnosing mental illness isn't a straightforward science. We can't test for it the same way we can test blood sugar levels for diabetes. Each condition has its own set of unique symptoms, though symptoms often overlap. Common signs and/or symptoms can include:

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- ! Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
 - ! Trying to harm or end one's life or making plans to do so
 - ! Severe, out-of-control, risk-taking behavior that causes harm to self or others
 - ! Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or difficulty breathing
 - ! Significant weight loss or gain
 - ! Seeing, hearing or believing things that aren't real*
 - ! Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
 - ! Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
 - ! Extreme difficulty concentrating or staying still
 - ! Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities

*Various communities and backgrounds might view this sign differently based on their beliefs and experiences. Some people within these communities and cultures may not interpret hearing voices as unusual.

WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF OR SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT?

? If you notice any of these symptoms, it's important to ask questions



Try to understand what they're experiencing and how their daily life is impacted



Making this connection is often the first step to getting treatment

50%
of all lifetime
mental illness
begins by age
14

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER



Talk with a health care professional



Learn more about mental illness



Take a mental health education class



Call the NAMI HelpLine at 800-950-NAMI (6264)

75%
by age
24

Data from CDC, NIMH and other select sources. Find citations for this resource at nami.org/mhstats

NAMI HelpLine
800-950-NAMI (6264)



nami
National Alliance on Mental Illness

- Social inequalities

- [Substance use](#)

Some of the factors that can help offer protection against poor mental health including having

supportive social relationships

strong coping skills

opportunities for engagement in the community

physical and psychological security.

According to Clinical Psychologist Marshall Rosenberg, the founder of Nonviolent Communication there are basic human needs. I liken these to conditions necessary for mental health:

Connection which include but are not limited to: Acceptance, Affection, Belonging, Cooperation, Closeness, Empathy, Inclusion, Intimacy, Love, Safety, Security, Stability, To know and be known, To understand and be understood, Trust.

Physical Well-Being: which include but are not limited to: Air, Food, Movement/Exercise, Rest/Sleep, Sexual Expression, Safety, Shelter, Touch, Water

Honesty which include but are not limited to: Authenticity, Integrity, Presence

Play which include but are not limited to: Joy and Humor

Peace Beauty, Communion, Ease, Equality, Harmony, Inspiration, Order

Meaning which include but are not limited to: Awareness, Celebration of Life, Challenge, Clarity Competence, Creativity, Effectiveness, Hope, Mourning, Purpose, Self-expression, To matter, Understanding.

Autonomy which include but are not limited to: Choice, Freedom, Independence, Space, Spontaneity

An easy to remember basic human needs is to remember the five A's.

Attention, Acceptance, Affection, Appreciation, Autonomy.

Signs of Mental Illness

This from NAMI, the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

Each illness has its own symptoms, but common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one’s own feelings, behavior or personality (“lack of insight” or anosognosia)
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing “aches and pains”)
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

Mental health conditions can also begin to develop in young children. Because they’re still learning how to identify and talk about thoughts and emotions, their most obvious symptoms are behavioral. Symptoms in children may include the following:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety, for instance fighting to avoid bed or school
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums

