



In Good Health Newsletter, November

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Valerie Smith, MS, ACM JIF Wellness Director

November Mental Health



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What is Mental Health?

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood. Many factors contribute to mental health problems including:

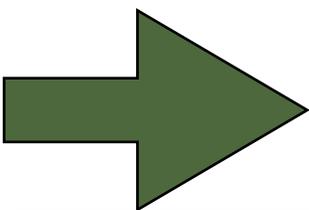
- Biological factors such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Early Warning Signs

Experiencing one or more of the following feelings or behaviors can be an early warning sign of a problem:

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people or usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling numb or like nothing matters
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
- Yelling or fighting with family or friends
- Experiencing severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Having persistent thoughts or memories you can't get out of your head
- Hearing voices or believing things that are not true
- Thinking of harming yourself or others
- Inability to perform daily tasks like, taking care of your kids or getting to school or work

**VALERIE SMITH MS, WELLNESS DIRECTOR,
ACMJIFWELLNESS@GMAIL.COM 609-251-7811**



Types of Mental Disorders

Did You Know?

About one in five American adults experience at least one mental illness each year. And around one in five young people ages 13 to 18 experience a mental illness at some point in their lives, too. About one in 25 adults experience a serious mental illness (SMI) each year. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, women are more likely to experience SMI than men. Those ages 18 to 25 are most likely to experience an SMI. People with a mixed-race background are also more likely to experience an SMI than people of other ethnicities.

There are five major categories of mental illness:

- Anxiety Disorders
- Mood Disorders
- Schizophrenia and Psychotic Disorders
- Dementia
- Eating Disorders

What Causes Mental Disorders?

There is no single cause for mental illness. A number of factors can contribute to risk for mental illness, such as:

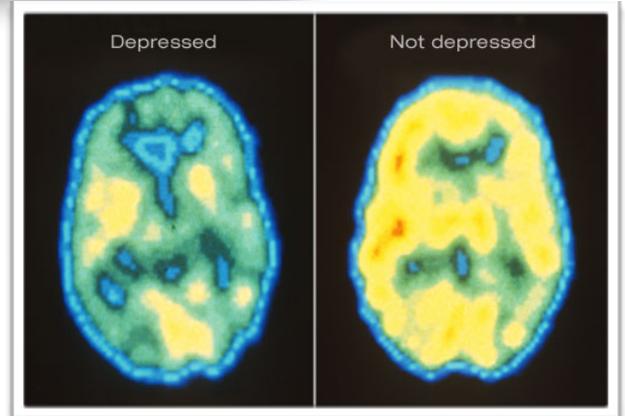
- Your genes and family history
- Your life experiences, such as stress or a history of abuse, especially if they happen in childhood
- Biological factors such as chemical imbalances in the brain
- A traumatic brain injury
- A mother's exposure to viruses or toxic chemicals while pregnant
- Use of alcohol or recreational drugs
- Having a serious medical condition like cancer
- Having few friends, and feeling lonely or isolated

Mental disorders are not caused by character flaws. They have nothing to do with being lazy or weak.

Depression

322 million people worldwide live with depression.

Major depression is an episode of sadness or apathy along with other symptoms that lasts at least two consecutive weeks and is severe enough to interrupt daily activities. Depression is not a sign of weakness or a negative personality. It is a major public health problem and a treatable medical condition.



Shown here are PET scans of the brain showing different activity levels in a person with depression, compared to a person without depression.

Depression Symptoms

- **Emotional:** The primary symptoms of depression are a sad mood and/or loss of interest in life. Activities that were once pleasurable lose their appeal. Patients may also be haunted by a sense of guilt or worthlessness, lack of hope, and recurring thoughts of death or suicide.
- **Physical:** fatigue & decreased energy
 - Insomnia ,especially early morning waking
 - Excessive sleep
 - Persistent aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease, even with treatment
- **Appetite:** Changes in appetite or weight are another hallmark of depression. Some patients develop increased appetite, while others lose their appetite altogether. Depressed people may experience serious weight loss or weight gain.

Causes of Depression

Doctors aren't sure what causes depression, but a prominent theory is altered brain structure and chemical function. Brain circuits that regulate mood may work less efficiently during depression. Drugs that treat depression are believed to improve communication between nerve cells, making them run more normally. Experts also think that while stress -- such as losing a loved one -- can trigger depression, one must first be biologically prone to develop the disorder. Other triggers could include certain medications, alcohol or substance abuse, hormonal changes, or even the season.

Depression

Seasonal Depression

If your mood matches the season -- sunny in the summer, gloomy in the winter -- you may have a form of depression called seasonal affective disorder (SAD). The onset of SAD usually occurs in the late fall and early winter, as the daylight hours grow shorter. Experts say SAD affects from 3% to 20% of all people, depending upon where they live.



Postpartum Depression

The "baby blues" strikes as many as three out of four new mothers. But nearly 12% develop a more intense dark mood that lingers even as their baby thrives. This is known as postpartum depression, and the symptoms are the same as those of major depression. An important difference is that the baby's well-being is also at stake. A depressed mother may have trouble enjoying and bonding with her infant.



Exercise For Depression

Research suggests exercise is a potent weapon against mild to moderate depression. Physical activity releases endorphins that can help boost mood. Regular exercise is also linked to higher self-esteem, better sleep, less stress, and more energy. Any type of moderate activity, from swimming to housework, can help. Choose something you enjoy and aim for 20 to 30 minutes four or five times a week.

Social Support

Because loneliness goes hand-in-hand with depression, developing a social support network can be an important part of treatment. This may include joining a support group, finding an online support community, or making a genuine effort to see friends and family more often. Even joining a book club or taking classes at your gym can help you connect with people on a regular basis.



Good Outlook

In the midst of major depression, you may feel hopeless and helpless. But the fact is, this condition is highly treatable. More than 80% of people get better with medication, talk therapy, or a combination of the two. Even when these therapies fail to help, there are cutting-edge treatments that pick up the slack.

Anxiety Disorders

- Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the U.S., affecting 40 million adults in the United States age 18 and older, or 18.1% of the population every year.
- Anxiety disorders are highly treatable, yet only 36.9% of those suffering receive treatment.
- People with an anxiety disorder are three to five times more likely to go to the doctor and six times more likely to be hospitalized for psychiatric disorders than those who do not suffer from anxiety disorders.
- Anxiety disorders develop from a complex set of risk factors, including genetics, brain chemistry, personality, and life events.

VALERIE SMITH MS, WELLNESS DIRECTOR,
ACMJIFWELLNESS@GMAIL.COM 609-251-7811

Anxiety Disorders

Symptoms - People typically experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Feelings of apprehension or dread
- Feeling tense or jumpy
- Restlessness or irritability
- Anticipating the worst and being watchful for signs of danger
- Pounding or racing heart and shortness of breath
- Sweating, tremors and twitches
- Headaches, fatigue and insomnia
- Upset stomach, frequent urination or diarrhea

Types of Anxiety Disorders - There are many types of anxiety disorders, each with different symptoms. The most common types of anxiety disorders include:

- **Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)** - GAD produces chronic, exaggerated worrying about everyday life. This worrying can consume hours each day, making it hard to concentrate or finish daily tasks.
- **Social Anxiety Disorder** - More than shyness, this disorder causes intense fear about social interaction, often driven by irrational worries about humiliation (e.g. saying something stupid or not knowing what to say).
- **Panic Disorder** - This disorder is characterized by panic attacks and sudden feelings of terror sometimes striking repeatedly and without warning. Often mistaken for a heart attack, a panic attack causes powerful physical symptoms including chest pain, heart palpitations, dizziness, shortness of breath and stomach upset
- **Phobias** -For someone with a phobia, certain places, events or objects create powerful reactions of strong, irrational fear. Most people with specific phobias have several things that can trigger those reactions; to avoid panic, they will work hard to avoid their triggers. Depending on the type and number of triggers, attempts to control fear can take over a person's life.

Diaagnosis

Physical symptoms of an anxiety disorder can be easily confused with other medical conditions, like heart disease or hyperthyroidism. Therefore, a doctor will likely perform an evaluation involving a physical examination, an interview and lab tests. After ruling out an underlying physical illness, a doctor may refer a person to a mental health professional for evaluation.

Treatment

Different anxiety disorders have their own distinct sets of symptoms. This means that each type of anxiety disorder also has its own treatment plan. But there are common types of treatment that are used:

- Psychotherapy
- Medications
- Complementary health approaches including stress and relaxation techniques

Get Immediate Help!

People often don't get the mental health services they need because they don't know where to start.

Talk to your primary care doctor or another health professional about mental health problems. Ask them to connect you with the right mental health services.

If you do not have a health professional who is able to assist you, use these resources to find help for yourself, your friends, your family, or your students.

Emergency Medical Services - 911

If the situation is potentially life-threatening, get immediate emergency assistance by calling 911, available 24 hours a day.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-talk (8255)

If you or someone you know is suicidal or in emotional distress, contact the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#). Trained crisis workers are available to talk **24 hours a day, 7 days a week**. Your confidential and toll-free call goes to the nearest crisis center in the Lifeline national network. These centers provide crisis counseling and mental health referrals.



SAMHSA Treatment Referral Helpline, 1-877-SAMHSA7 (1-877-726-4727).

Get general information on mental health and locate treatment services in your area. Speak to a live person, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST.

Slow Cooker Black Bean Pumpkin Chilli



Black beans, pumpkin, chili spices, and pumpkin spices simmer together in your Crock Pot to make a perfect – and perfectly healthy – fall meal.

Ingredients

- 3 (15-ounce) cans black beans, drained
- 2 (14.5-ounce)cans plain diced tomatoes
- 1 cup [pureed pumpkin](#) (not pumpkin pie mix)
- 2 cups diced yellow onion (about 1 medium onion)
- 1 medium yellow bell pepper, diced
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon coarse ground black pepper
- Assorted toppings of your choice like avocado, cherry tomatoes, chopped scallions or onion, cilantro, Tapatio sauce (if you want to add some heat), or, if not vegan, shredded cheddar or jack cheese and sour cream

Directions

- Add all ingredients to a 4-quart or larger slow cooker. Stir.
- Cook on low for 8 – 10 hours.
- Serve with assorted toppings.

kitchentreaty.com

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