

People with Mental Health Difficulties

Most of us will, at some stage in our lives, experience times when stressful situations can make us very depressed or agitated.

For some people, these feelings can become more acute, affecting the ability to carry on normally with life. This could be triggered by a particular event, although some people can develop mental ill health for no obvious external reason.

Common factors in any episode of mental ill-health

- The impairment in our capacity to cope with everyday life
- An exaggerated response rather than a “normal” reaction to certain situations
- Perceiving reality in a distorted way, feeling that for example “a black cloud has descended”
- A loss of control – thoughts, feelings, reactions and occasionally actions may feel out of control

Some factors affecting mental health

- The amount of stress you are experiencing in the different aspects of your life
- Your level of self esteem
- Your involvement in a social network, work or home
- Relationships with family and friends
- Your physical well-being
- Your own support network
- Whether you are eating and sleeping well
- How well you are able to look after yourself
- The balance between work/relaxation duty/pleasure
- How much you feel able to influence what happens to you
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Experiencing a sense of loss or bereavement, losing a job

Anybody can experience Mental Health Difficulties at any time

Mental Health Diagnosis

- **ANXIETY** is a constant and unrealistic worry. It can cause restlessness and sleeping problems as well as physical symptoms such as increased heartbeat, upset stomach and muscular tension
- **DEPRESSION** is characterised by a lowered mood. People who are depressed can feel hopeless, worthless, unmotivated and exhausted. It can cause sleep disturbance, loss of appetite and lowered self-esteem. It affects physical health and the ability to engage in daily activities.
- **MANIC DEPRESSION (BIPOLAR ILLNESS)** Characterised by mood swings from deep depression to extreme “highs”. Hyperactivity, scattered ideas, being easily distracted or irritable, recklessness and loss of inhibition can occur during manic episodes.
- **OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER (OCD)**
Developing rituals such as repeatedly checking switches, washing hands or counting. The belief that bad things will happen if a set of routines are not followed. Fear and distress of such thoughts can cause anxiety.
- **PANIC ATTACKS** are sudden, unexpected bouts of terror, characterised by shortness of breath, heart palpitations, chest pain, choking, trembling and fainting. They can occur at any time.
- **PHOBIAS** are an unreasonable fear of a situation or object. Some such as fears of heights or snakes are common. Less common phobias such as agoraphobia (the fear of open spaces and going out) can cause a major disruption in their life.
- **PSYCHOSIS** is used to describe schizophrenia or manic depression. Sufferers may have lost touch with reality and be unaware that there is a problem. Some people may have psychotic episodes, disturbed thinking or erratic behaviour which may be interspersed with rational and calm periods.
- **SCHIZOPHRENIA** is characterised by distorted thoughts and perception including hallucinations, hearing voices, delusions and paranoia. People with schizophrenia can become confused and withdrawn. It can be debilitating and severely interfere with a

person's ability to perform everyday tasks and activities. Some people may only have one schizophrenic episode in their life and make a full recovery. Others have schizophrenia all their lives but can control it well with medication. Others do not. People with schizophrenia are rarely violent.

- **SELF-HARM** is the committing of acts which cause personal harm, including self injury, eating disorders or taking toxic substances. It is viewed as an "inner scream" or a symbolic way of expressing deep distress.



Useful Websites

MIND (The Mental Health charity)

www.mind.org.uk

The Mental Health

www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Further help in the Library

If you need help in the Library contact:

Lisa Croft	01204903092	L.Croft@bolton.ac.uk
Denise Mercer	01204903264	D.Mercer@bolton.ac.uk

Support in the University of Bolton

If you require any advice regarding Mental Health or other disability issues please contact the Disability Service:

Phone: 01204 903478
E-mail: disabilityinfo@bolton.ac.uk
Website: <http://www.bolton.ac.uk/disability>

The Library

Mental Health *awareness*

