TAKING CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

A REVIEW OF IMMIGRANT MENTAL HEALTH

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WHAT IS HEALTH?

"The state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being"

- World Health Organization [WHO]
The brain can get sick just like the heart or the lungs!
WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

"Includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being"

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
MENTAL HEALTH ≠ MENTAL ILLNESS
"Mental Illnesses refer to disorders generally characterized by dysregulation of mood, thought, and/or behavior"

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC]
MENTAL HEALTH ≠ MENTAL ILLNESS
FACT OR MYTH
"MENTAL ILLNESSES ARE MORE COMMON THAN CANCER, DIABETES, OR HEART DISEASE"
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FACT!

• One in 5 adults has a diagnosable mental illness

• Depression is the **leading** cause of disability worldwide
"MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS DON'T AFFECT ME"
MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS DON'T AFFECT ME

MYTH!

• Mental Illness affects everyone across age, culture, race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation

17.8% of the U.S. population is estimated to be Latino or Hispanic.

Of those, over 15% had a diagnosable mental illness in the past year.

That is over 8.9 million people

MORE than the number of people who live in New York City.

SOURCES
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/feat/table/US/ST/20216
https://www.samhsa.gov/specific-populations/racial-ethnic-minority/
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/US/ST/20216
"RECOVERY IS NOT POSSIBLE"
"RECOVERY IS NOT POSSIBLE"

× MYTH!

• Up to 90% of people being treated recover

• Success rates are comparable to physical health rates
  • 70-80% asthma and diabetes
  • 60-70% cardiovascular disease
  • 41-52% heart disease
"STIGMA IS A BARRIER TO RECOVERY"
"STIGMA IS A BARRIER TO RECOVERY"

FACT!

• Nearly 60% of adults with a mental illness did not receive mental health services

• Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide
WHAT WE KNOW

- Biological diseases due to abnormal brain function
- Rarely caused by stress alone
- Treatable
- Most are not severe and go untreated
WHAT WE KNOW

- Not caused by weakness or lack of willpower
- Not divine punishment
- Not caused by witchcraft or evil eye
- Not the person's or their parents' fault
- Not contagious
GET HELP!
WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BODY
WHAT HAPPENS IN YOUR BODY

**SCHIZOPHRENIA**
- Blank, vacant facial expression
- Insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Involuntary movements of the tongue or mouth
- Overly acute senses
- Clumsy, inexact motor skills
- Awkward gait

**DEPRESSION**
- Headaches
- Muscle aches and joint pain
- Insomnia
- Chest pain
- Back pain
- Change in appetite

**ANXIETY DISORDERS**
- Twitching
- Lightheadedness
- Nausea
- Racing heartbeat
- Burning sensation on face, neck, ears, scalp or shoulders
- Weight loss/weight gain
OTHER SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

• Pulling away from people and usual activities
• Feeling numb or like nothing matters
• Feeling helpless or hopeless

• Smoking, drinking, or using drugs more than usual
• Changes in temperament or mood swings
• Thinking of harming yourself or others
WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT MY MENTAL HEALTH?
WHY SHOULD I WORRY ABOUT MY MENTAL HEALTH?

• Physical presentations of poor mental health
  o Cardiovascular Problems [high blood pressure]
  o Digestive problems [constipation; stomach ulcers]
  o Skin problems [rashes; hives]

• Social and emotional presentations of poor mental health
  o Substance abuse
  o Social isolation and disengagement
  o Self-harm
Members of ethnic and racial minority groups in the U.S. "face a social and economic environment of inequality that includes greater exposure to racism, discrimination, violence and poverty, all of which take a toll on mental health"

- U.S. Surgeon General
IMMIGRATION MENTAL HEALTH RISK FACTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Migration</th>
<th>Migration</th>
<th>Post-Migration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Poverty &amp; illiteracy</td>
<td>• Immigration process</td>
<td>• Fear of current immigrant status</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Traumas [war, persecution, crime, famine]</td>
<td>• Victimization during journey [theft, violence, sexual abuse]</td>
<td>• Difficulties in acculturation, adaptation and learning language</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Political involvement</td>
<td>• Uncertainty of outcome</td>
<td>• Discrimination and social exclusion</td>
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<td>• Environmental catastrophe</td>
<td>• Exposure to harsh living conditions</td>
<td>• Unemployment or underemployment</td>
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COMMON LATINO MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Major Depression
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder [PTSD]
- Alcoholism
- Suicide*

*High rates of suicide attempts among Latina high school girls
WAYS TO GET HELP

1. Go directly to a Mental Health Professional

2. Talk with your Primary Care doctor

3. Connect with other individuals and families

4. Learn more about mental health and mental illness
MORE RESOURCES

• Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
  https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/refugee-mental-health

• Northwest Immigrant and Refugee Health Coalition
  https://www.nwirhc.org/

• Refugee Women's Alliance [ReWA]
  https://www.rewa.org/

• National Alliance on Mental Illness [NAMI]
  https://www.nami.org/

• National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH]
  https://www.nimh.nih.gov/
Any Questions?

Thank You!