

MENTAL ILLNESS WITH GRACE

SESSION 1 – IMPACT OF MENTAL ILLNESS ON INDIVIDUAL AND FAMILIES

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OPENING PRAYER

- For each of us to reach out with compassion to those who experience mental illness so that they may know that they are not alone, we pray .
- For persons who suffer from depression or burn-out, that they will find support and a light that opens them up to life, we pray
- For all persons who themselves or within their families live with mental illness, that the joy and love of Jesus may bring them comfort, we pray
- For people with mental illness who are confined in jails and prisons or who live on the streets without homes or hope, we pray.

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

- Awareness
- Acceptance
- Accompaniment
- Desired Outcome

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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What was your first experience of a person with a mental illness ?
- How did it make you feel ?

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WRAP-UP OF SMALL DISCUSSION GROUPS

- Summary responses to the questions.

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INTRODUCTION

- Trying to tell the difference between what expected behaviors are and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn't always easy. There's no easy test that can let someone know if there is mental illness or if actions and thoughts might be typical behaviors of a person or the result of a physical illness.

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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

8 COMMON SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS

- 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)

9 COMMON SIGNS OF MENTAL ILLNESS IN ADULTS AND ADOLESCENTS

- 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

- A mental illness is a condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling, behavior or mood. These conditions deeply impact day-to-day living and may also affect the ability to relate to others. If you have — or think you might have — a mental illness, the first thing you must know is that **you are not alone**. Mental health conditions are far more common than you think, mainly because people don't like to, or are scared to, talk about them.

MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24

MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

- A mental health condition isn't the result of one event. Research suggests multiple, linking causes. Genetics, environment and lifestyle influence whether someone develops a mental health condition. A stressful job or home life makes some people more susceptible, as do traumatic life events. Biochemical processes and circuits and basic brain structure may play a role, too.
- None of this means that you're broken or that you, or your family, did something "wrong." Mental illness is no one's fault. And for many people, recovery — including meaningful roles in social life, school and work — is possible, especially when you start treatment early and play a strong role in your own recovery process.

CONDITIONS

- **Anxiety Disorders:** Everyone can experience anxiety, but when symptoms are overwhelming and constant — often impacting everyday living — it may be an anxiety disorder)
- **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):** ADHD is a developmental disorder defined by inattention (trouble staying on task, listening); disorganization (losing materials); and hyperactivity-impulsivity (fidgeting, difficulty staying seated or waiting).

CONDITIONS

- **Bipolar Disorder:** Bipolar disorder causes dramatic shifts in a person's mood, energy and ability to think clearly. Individuals with this disorder experience extreme high and low moods, known as mania and depression. Some people can be symptom-free for many years between episodes.
- **Borderline Personality Disorder:** BPD is characterized by a pattern of instability in emotions (commonly referred to as dysregulation), interpersonal relationships and self-image. Individuals with BPD can also struggle with impulsivity and self-harm

CONDITIONS

- **Depression:** Depression involves recurrent, severe periods of clear-cut changes in mood, thought processes and motivation lasting for a minimum of two weeks. Changes in thought processes typically include negative thoughts and hopelessness. Depression also involves affects sleep/energy, appetite or weight.
- **Dissociative Disorders:** Dissociative disorders, which are frequently associated with trauma, disrupt every area of psychological functioning: consciousness, memory, identity, emotion, motor control and behavior.

CONDITIONS

- **Eating Disorders:** Eating disorders are characterized by the intentional changing of food consumption to the point where physical health or social behaviors are affected.
- **Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder:** OCD involves persistent, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors that a person feels driven to perform (compulsions) in response to those thoughts.
- **Posttraumatic Stress Disorder:** PTSD involves a set of physiological and psychological responses. It can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, rape, war/combat or something similar.

CONDITIONS

- **Psychosis:** Psychosis is characterized as disruptions to a person's thoughts and perceptions that make it difficult for them to recognize what is real and what isn't.
- **Schizophrenia:** Schizophrenia interferes with a person's ability to think clearly, manage emotions, make decisions and relate to others. It also causes people to lose touch with reality, often in the form of hallucinations and delusions.
- <https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions>

CLOSING PRAYER

- For persons with a mental illness, and their families to find effective treatment for their illness and understanding and acceptance from others, we pray
- For families who strive to understand and help their loved ones with mental illness, Loving God, lift their burdens, calm their anxiety, and quiet their fears. We pray
- For the Church and public agencies to act with justice and to ensure the availability of necessary supportive services to aid in the recovery of persons who live with mental health concerns, we pray
- For all who provide services for persons whose lives are affected by mental illness – social workers, counselors, mental health professionals, pastoral caregivers – that they will bear witness to God's spirit of love, we pray.