

Worried Sick

I have chosen the CMA article *Worried Sick* by Mark Harris for two main reasons. The first being that mental health is something that I find very interesting. There is such a broad range of information that differentiates from person to person. The other reason I have chosen this article is because I feel as though I can relate to it, being diagnosed with anxiety myself. I truly believe that good physical health should start with good mental health. Today mental health still doesn't have the best stigma around it. If you seek treatment, whether it be therapy or medications, you're crazy. Avoiding treatment for mental health can result in depression, substance abuse or even physical illness.

There are three types of anxiety discussed in the article. Generalized anxiety disorder or GAD which is when a person is in distress by worrying most days than not. GAD is usually accompanied by restlessness, irritability, difficulty concentrating, trouble falling and staying asleep and fatigue. A panic disorder is a type of anxiety that presents as a sudden feeling of fear usually paired with physical symptoms such as heart palpitations, fast heartbeat, sweating, shaking and shortness of breath, along with feeling out of control or feeling impending doom. The last anxiety disorder that the article discusses is social anxiety disorder. This, like GAD is more common. It is the fear of being in public, sometimes in large groups, sometimes in smaller groups. People who have this condition usually have a hard time making presentations or simply just talking with others. They may also worry and be obsessed over an upcoming event or meeting.

This article also discusses therapy treatment for people with anxiety. According to the National Institute of Mental Health only 36.9% of people who have an anxiety disorder, seek treatment. Some people have a hard time figuring out where to start and what resources there are

in their community. Others are unsure if their insurance will cover the expenses. Lastly some just don't have the time or energy to commit to therapy or medication as it takes too much time to make appointments and get into a provider.

Worried Sick also discusses a variety of therapy treatments. Cognitive behavioral therapy or CBT allows patients to become more aware of how their thought processes work and how they may be adding to their anxiety. Exposure therapy or ET which mainly is associated with phobias uses the idea that over time and exposure the feared object or situation the person will "unlearn" their anxiety. The article goes on to explain more of the therapies and their workings in detail.

While reading this article I learned that there is a newer style of therapy that has rolled out called eye movement desensitization and reprocessing therapy or EMDR. This therapy techniques are focused towards PTSD, phobias and panic attacks. The clinician must be trained with this process and uses guided eye movements that are quite similar to that of the REM stage of sleep. Doing so, changes the way that the brain interprets information. Another newer form of therapy that I haven't heard a lot about is emotion regulation therapy, ERT. ERT combines some of the workings of CBT, DBT and other treatments to help people better regulate and understand their own emotions.

While reading the article I also learned that it is recommended that a person seek treatment through some form of therapy for at least twelve months before using medications. According to Dr Mennin of Kent State University, there is an overuse of medications within American to treat anxiety. He believes that it trains your brain to need those medications when an anxiety or panic attack happen, rather than dealing with the feelings through therapy. Dr

Mennin also stated that it is preferred to use SNRI's (serotonin-norepinephrine_ or SSRI's (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors) over benzotropine's. As benzotropine's are the medications that are more likely to train you brain into needed them.

Worried Sick pertains to the medical assistance in that we must always take what the patient says about their symptoms whole heartedly. It is very important to validate the patient and make it know that you empathize with them and that what they're feeling is real. If a medical assistant were to shrug the symptoms or worries of the patient off than the patient may prolong treatment causing them to decrease not only mentally but possibly physically as well. It is important to listen and communicate within the practice and other practices as some anxiety can cause medical conditions such as headaches, back paint, GI issues, and muscle tension. Whereas some medical conditions that can cause anxiety are thyroid issues, some medications, or a diagnosis itself. As a medical assistant we should always believe what the patient is telling us is true, no matter our personal beliefs or those of others.