

History of our mental health treatment

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18 October 2020

## History of mental health treatment

Our mental health has gone through so many agonizing treatments to get to where things are now. They experienced the horrors that asylums brought. Being treated as if their life was pointless or a joke. Can you imagine if you were a psychiatric patient in this era? How do you think you would handle the situations faced in front of you? The point is our mentally ill had suffered a lot. For the most part in modern day all of this has been left in the past and our mental health is actually treated fairly well in most settings. We are still learning as a society and new treatments are upcoming.

## Outline

Thesis: Mental health treatment has come a long way dating back to prehistoric times to today.

How much has actually changed and are some treatments still practiced today?

1. What is mental health
2. Timeline
  - a. Past-today
3. Treatments
  - a. Asylums
  - b. Past treatments
  - c. Effects of the treatments
4. How is today's mental health treated
  - a. Psychiatric centers
  - b. Medications
  - c. Outpatient care
5. Conclusion

Mental health is a disorder in the brain that affects the way one thinks, feels and acts. It changes how we relate to the world, others, and how we make decisions. You may experience mental illness if you had a traumatic experience in your life or if it was passed down through your genes. Mental health is fairly common and in fact one in four people experience some sort of mental illness. Just because you have mental health problems or start to experience issues does not mean it is there forever. There are ways of treating mental illness and some recover fully, but we will talk more in depth as we go on.

In the mid 1700s was an era of some of the most inhumane mental health treatments on record. This was the era that asylums became famous for housing the mentally ill. In the eyes of Jefferey Lieberman (Psychiatrist) asylums were not a place for treatment, they were there to segregate our mentally ill from society (Fibian, 2018). Was Lieberman wrong about this or was he right? Asylums were the perfect place to experiment with our mentally ill. While in the asylums some patients were beaten, had their hands and feet tied. Some patients were even held under cold water. This treatment option at the time was called hydrotherapy and it was thought to help with patients who were experiencing a manic episode.

In the early 1900 a man named Henry Cotton who was a superintendent at Trenton state hospital thought that the leading cause of mental illness was due to infections around the body (Fibian, 2018). His main focus was the rotting of teeth and pulling them out. He thought the rotten teeth caused madness in patients. As time went on Cotton decided to take things to the next step, he would remove parts of stomachs, small intestine, appendix, gallbladder, thyroid gland and different parts of the colon (Fibian, 2018). Exactly as you thought this did not help the patients whatsoever, this actually made them succumb to their now new injuries.

In the Neolithic period or around prehistoric times, trephination was an early method that removed a small part of the human skull. This was performed by often using a drill. Doctors believed this helped relieve headaches, mental illness and even demonic possessions. Researchers have found through human remains of such practice that there was a small survival rate and some human remains showed signs of healing. Surprisingly this method is still used today but in different circumstances. This treatment is used with eye surgeries, treatments involving the nails and bones. Though it is not as common as it once was.

Around the 1930s electroconvulsive therapy also known as ECT was introduced to the world. Electroconvulsive therapy worked by influencing seizures to relieve symptoms of mental illness. Although patients were benefiting from the treatment method there is no question that ECT was used in a fearful manner. This method was used as punishments to patients and also a means of death. That being said electroconvulsive therapy is still used by many humans today. This treatment is mainly used today to treat depression, mania and symptoms of schizophrenia.

Walter Freeman who was a Physician brought the United States the practice of lobotomies in the mid 1940s (Fibian, 2018). Lobotomies are a neuro treatment that severs the connections of the prefrontal cortex in the brain. This procedure helped some but not without causing more harm. Doing so caused patients to have memory loss and personality changes. Around 50,000 lobotomies were performed. This method of treatment was dismissed when psychiatric medications were introduced.

In our modern day, mental health patients are treated differently. Nowadays we have psychiatric centers like Acadia hospital. Acadia is more of a short term to give you a boost to get back on your feet. Acadia hospital is a great place that helps our mental health get on their feet

but it is up to the patients to also help themselves as well. In order to keep up with your treatment, you need to continue taking your medications and/or seek counseling as well. Acadia hospital was introduced on August 27, 1972. Ever since Acadia has been a great program for our mentally ill.

On the other hand Dorothea Dix is more of a long term care program. Dorothea Dix houses societies with more unstable mental health. This Psychiatric center is more of a long term care option, not everyone goes there. This is a place that houses mental health that have done serious crimes and are not safe to be out in the world without supervision. I work in the Emergency Departments psychiatric portion, I have only seen a small fraction of patients go to Dorothea Dix. Unless you have committed a serious crime or are very unstable, Dorothea Dix will not accept you.

Psychiatric medications is another way of assisting our mental health. Psychiatric medications go as far back as the 1800s. Medications were used to keep the asylums from being overcrowded and keep things stable. In this era they used medications to chemically restrain the patient. Medications like opium and morphine were administered to the patients. Some patients had side effects and/or caused them to have an addiction. The asylums tried many different medication methods but most of them caused side effects and psychotic episodes. Since these methods were not working drugs like Zyprexa came into the picture and were a great start in actually helping our mental health, which is still used effectively today.

Outpatient care is great for those who do not necessarily need long term care in a psychiatric hospital setting . Outpatient treatment is also flexible with your daily lifestyle and can work around your daily routine. Outpatient care works by going to counseling, group meetings

and telepsych. This option is always available to someone who does not need immediate care, someone who is a lot more stable or others who fear going to a psychiatric facility.

Mental health treatment has significantly advanced compared to prehistoric times. Various different factors including medications, outpatient care, psychiatric centers, and treatments faced in asylums have come a long way and have made the overall care of our psychiatric patients better. From brutal and inhumane treatments and facilities to state of the art clinics and psychiatric treatment centers, our mental health care skills and knowledge have exceeded from how it was. In present day communities mental health has become a major focus and many government resources have been devoted to helping those with mental health issues.

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