

Chapter 32

Chronic Mental Health Disorders

Learning Objectives

- 1) Explain how deinstitutionalization has affected the delivery of mental health care in the United States.
- 2) Describe the experience of mental illness from a client's viewpoint.
- 3) Outline three psychological and three biological characteristics of chronic mental illness.

Learning Objectives

- 4) Examine the connection between human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) and mental illness.
- 5) Explain how children and adolescents can be affected by chronic mental health problems.
- 6) Summarize the care for clients with multiple mental health problems.

Learning Objectives

- 7) Discuss three principles of psychiatric rehabilitation.
- 8) Apply the nursing (therapeutic) process to clients with chronic mental health disorders.
- 9) Plan seven basic interventions for clients who are chronically mentally disordered.

Scope of Mental Illness (p. 374)

- Chronic mental disorders are disabling for individuals in every society and culture.
- One in every five families is affected by a severe mental illness in their lifetime.
- The estimated costs of treating individuals with mental disorders are about 4% of total U.S. direct health care costs.
- Inpatient stays cost more than \$12 billion per year.

Scope of Mental Illness cont'd.

(p. 374)

- Chronic mental illness carries social stigmas.
- Because mental illness affects every area of functioning, each chronically mentally troubled individual has a unique life experience.

Public Policy and Mental Health (p. 375)

- The effects of deinstitutionalization
 - In 1960s, chemical restraints replaced physical restraints (i.e., in institutions).
 - State psychiatric hospitals began to discharge long-term patients into the community through deinstitutionalization.
 - Aftercare, which was a critical part of the overall plan for providing community psychiatric services, failed to be implemented.

Experience of Chronic Mental Illness (p. 375)

- Meeting basic needs
 - Issues facing the mentally troubled population are similar to those faced by the rest of the population:
 - Adequate food
 - Shelter
 - Clothing
 - Gainful employment
 - Access to health care
 - Individuals with chronic mental illness, however, must strive to meet their needs on a daily basis.

Experience of Chronic Mental Illness cont'd. (p. 376)

- Access to health care
 - Today, a new generation of individuals with chronic mental illness is emerging; they are known as the young chronically mentally ill.
 - Individuals are young.
 - They are severely ill.
 - Most have never sought treatment.
 - Those who do receive treatment refuse to follow therapeutic advice.
 - Many self-medicate to relieve distressing symptoms.

Characteristics of Chronic Mental Illness (p. 377)

- Each individual's experiences with mental illness are unique.
- Diagnoses serve only to group and label certain behaviors.
- Certain features are common to all individuals who must live with mental illness.
 - Characteristics are divided into two categories:
 - Psychological characteristics
 - Behavioral characteristics

Characteristics of Chronic Mental Illness cont'd. (p. 377)

- Psychological characteristics
 - Individuals have several intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual features in common.
 - Chronic low self-esteem, depression, loneliness, hopelessness
 - Mentally troubled individuals often see themselves as helpless, ineffective, and incapable of change.

Characteristics of Chronic Mental Illness cont'd. (p. 377)

- Behavioral characteristics
 - Often, these individuals are unable to function socially or occupationally.
 - Assaultive behaviors or criminal activities may occur.
 - Sexual behaviors of these individuals place them at increased risk for contracting and sharing sexually transmitted diseases.
 - Violence is an unfortunate experience of many chronically mentally troubled individuals.

Special Populations (p. 378)

- Chronic mental health problems can begin at any stage in life, but they usually are not noted until adulthood.
- Children and adolescents
 - Children with mental retardation have problems with the intellectual and emotional aspects of life.
 - Children with autism are in a world of their own.
 - Several chronic mental health problems may develop during adolescence.
 - Eating disorders, personality disorders, schizophrenia, and depression

Special Populations cont'd.

(p. 378)

- Older adults with chronic mental illness
 - The most commonly acquired mental health problems in older adulthood are Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.
 - Depression is another frequent chronic mental health problem of older adults.
 - The mental health of at least two generations depends on timely and supportive health care interventions.

Special Populations cont'd.

(p. 379)

- Individuals with multiple disorders
 - The word *co-morbidity* refers to the presence of two or more mental health disorders.
 - Dual diagnosis
 - The multidisciplinary treatment team seems to offer the most promising approach to helping clients with co-morbid disorders cope with their problems in each area of functioning.

Providing Care for Chronically Mentally Ill Persons (p. 379)

- Inpatient settings
 - Individuals with chronic mental health problems are hospitalized only when their behaviors pose a threat to themselves or others.
 - The average length of stay for mental illness is about 10 days.
 - State psychiatric institutions still provide care for more than 50% of all psychiatric inpatients.
 - The justice system also provides inpatient psychiatric care for many chronically mentally ill individuals.

Providing Care for Chronically Mentally Ill Persons cont'd. (p. 379)

- Outpatient settings
 - Once an acute psychiatric episode has subsided, many chronically mentally disordered clients are discharged to halfway houses or other group-living environments.
 - Many individuals with chronic mental illness live with their families.

Providing Care for Chronically Mentally Ill Persons cont'd. (p. 379)

- Psychiatric rehabilitation
 - A multidisciplinary approach uses the special talents of physicians, psychologists, nurses, occupational and physical therapists, dietitians, and other specialists.
 - Offers opportunities for individuals with severe mental illness to meet their often neglected social needs

Therapeutic Interventions

(p. 380)

- Treatments and therapies
 - Basic goals for chronically disordered mental health clients are as follows:
 - Achieve stabilization.
 - Maintain the highest possible level of daily functioning.
 - Therapies are designed on the basis of:
 - Identified problems
 - Available resources
 - Client's willingness to cooperate with the therapeutic regimen

Therapeutic Interventions

(p. 381)

- Pharmacological therapy
 - Antianxiety agents
 - Antidepressants
 - Antipsychotics (neuroleptics)
- Nurses must carefully monitor clients routinely for compliance with medications.

Therapeutic Interventions cont'd. (p. 381)

- Nursing (therapeutic) process
 - Nurses must perform thorough histories and must assess clients' physical status, perceptions, and behaviors.
 - Nursing diagnoses for chronically mentally ill clients are selected according to the client's identified problems.
 - Therapeutic interventions then are designed to help the client solve the identified problems.

Question 1

What percentage of American adults has a diagnosable mental disorder each year?

- 1) 15%
- 2) 23%
- 3) 33%
- 4) 42%

Question 2

The nurse is caring for a client who is suffering from two mental health disorders, one of which usually is substance related. The client's condition is known as what?

- 1) Comorbidity
- 2) Dual diagnosis
- 3) Chronic mental illnesses
- 4) Drug dependency

Question 3

The nurse is caring for a client who has a pattern of admission—a short institutional stay, discharge, a short community stay, and readmission. This pattern is known as what?

- 1) Remission
- 2) Recidivism
- 3) Exacerbation
- 4) Chronic rehabilitation

Question 4

The nurse is caring for a client who has just been admitted for a mental disorder. What is the average length of stay for a mental illness?

- 1) 5 days
- 2) 1 week
- 3) 10 days
- 4) 2 weeks

Question 5

Many inmates of state and local jails are actually individuals with mental illness. What percentage of inmates had mental disorders in 2003?

- 1) 10%
- 2) 16%
- 3) 24%
- 4) 35%

Question 6

The nurse is caring for a teenage client who has made many unsuccessful attempts at suicide that appear to have a low likelihood of success. The client's behaviors are considered to be:

- 1) Suicidal ideation
- 2) Suicidal gestures
- 3) Parasuicidal behaviors
- 4) Suicidal attempts