

Mental Health Illness

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It is important to know mental health illnesses affect people's mood, thinking and behaviour -this can be anyone. One in four people are affected by mental or neurological disorders, around 450 million currently suffer from such conditions (from www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

There are many disorders such as anxiety, panic disorders, phobias, PTSD, OCD, depression, separation anxiety, eating disorders, psychosis, ASD, ADHD, self-harm. A member of Whitecross Student Support team said that students that have these illnesses can use mind relaxing therapies e.g. music or work in smaller rooms to help encourage them to carry on with what they need to do.

We interviewed a mental health professional, who said that "people carrying a disorder won't necessarily realise" meaning mental illnesses are mainly identified by family or friends by a simple difference in the way somebody acts, like lack of sleep, too much sleep, or a lack of interest in activities you previously enjoyed.

He also informed us that "GPs help identify your problem and prescribe medication depending on how bad your disorder is, mostly antidepressants".

"If your disorder is very serious, you can be referred to a primary care mental health", a team that is made up of psychologist and a nurse who work well with people who can function well in the community despite their illness.

Another point that came out of the interview is that men are most likely to get affective-type of illnesses whereas women are most likely to develop illnesses involving psychosis.

We asked what could trigger mental ill health, and apparently, "The use of drugs can trigger mental health illness, (particularly widely used drugs like cannabis) cannabis can also exacerbate the symptoms of a mental illness that someone already has."

He also pointed out that research suggests poorer people are more likely to develop signs of mental ill health, "if you live in a lower socio-economic area you are more prone to develop your depressive and illnesses involving psychosis. Higher socio-economic areas are more likely to develop and affective-type illness like bi-polar affective disorder."

We were looking for some good news – whether there is a surefire cure – however, we were told, "There's no such a thing as a cure for mental health but you can lessen your chance of mental health illness."

In conclusion, there is lots of help available and there are many solutions over barriers e.g. smaller rooms for exams.