




Contemporary Context of Counselling Skills

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Module Learning Outcomes:

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- Evaluate a range of theories of causality relating to emotional distress and its impact on wellbeing
- Recognise links between individual experience of health and health issues and the wider structural elements relevant to health and wellbeing

Lesson Aims:

- Explore Core Concepts in Mental Health

Core Concepts in Mental Health



- ❖ 'Mental Health' is a generic term that usually refers to the quality of a person's general psychological well-being.
- ❖ Mental Health Act 2007 – 'A disorder or disability of the mind'

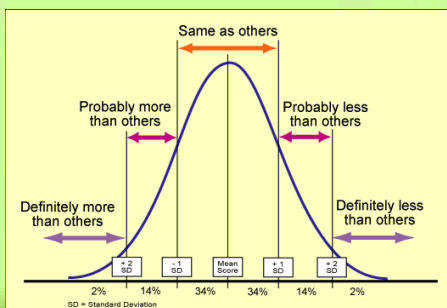
What is 'Normal'?



- ❖ In the realm of behaviour, social norms are widely held standards (beliefs and attitudes) that people use to make judgments about where behaviours are situated on such scales as good-bad, right-wrong, justified-unjustified, acceptable-unacceptable
- ❖ 'Good' mental health = 'Sanity' = 'Normal'
- ❖ 'Bad' mental health = 'Insanity' = 'Abnormal'
- ❖ Mental Illness = Disease

❖ Do we agree with this?

A Deviation from the Statistical 'Norm'



What do we know about Mental Health in Wales?

- ❖ 1 in 4 adults experience mental health problems at some point in their life.
- ❖ 1 in 6 experience symptoms at any one time
- ❖ 2 in 100 experience severe mental illness such as bipolar or schizophrenia at any one time
- ❖ 50% of people with enduring mental health problems have symptoms by age 14 years – some younger
- ❖ 1 in 10 new mothers experience post natal depression
- ❖ 1 in 10 children (5 – 16 years) has a mental health problem. Many more experience behavioural issues
- ❖ 1 in 16 over the age of 65 years and 1 in 6 over 80 years of age will be affected by dementia
- ❖ Approximately 43,000 people in Wales experience dementia. It is predicted to increase by over 30% in next 10 years
- ❖ 9 in 10 prisoners have a diagnosable mental health issue or substance misuse problem

What do we know about Mental Health in Wales?

- ❖ £587 invested in mental health in 2015
- ❖ 12% of NHS budget goes on mental health
- ❖ Estimated cost of mental health is £7.2 billion
- ❖ Mental health has a significant impact on life expectancy,
- ❖ Most deprived communities have poorest mental health and well being
- ❖ Mental Health accounts for 20% of disease (WHO)
- ❖ Many mental health problems start in early life often as a result of deprivation, neglect, poverty, insecure attachment, trauma, loss or abuse
- ❖ Many people with mental health problems more likely to be homeless, have fewer qualification, less likely to obtain or maintain employment, and have poorer health

What is Mental Health?

- ❖ Thomas Szasz and Ronald Laing argue the whole concept of 'madness' is a convenient myth (Double, 2006)
- ❖ 'Sane' people sometimes find themselves in 'insane' situations?
- ❖ 'Mad' societies create 'Mad' people?
- ❖ Physical medical conditions such as Thyroid dysfunction, blood sugar imbalance, hormonal imbalance can influence mood and behaviour..
- ❖ If we assume mental distress is caused by 'mental illness', then do we assume that doctors can cure the disease?
- ❖ There is a huge stigma attached to those who are deemed 'mentally ill' - The Royal College of Psychiatrists (RCPsych, 2009; Boardman et al, 2010)
- ❖ WE All get a bit depressed, a bit anxious, a bit stressed and a bit obsessed occasionally. Sometimes these unpleasant feelings can distort our reality.

What is Mental Health?

- ❖ Not always easy to agree on one definition of Mental Health as it seems to vary according to circumstances and individual differences (Pilgrim, 2009)
- ❖ Is psychological distress an illness or a normal part of being human
- ❖ During WWI 'shell-shocked' soldiers were deemed 'cowards' and 'emotionally weak', instead of reacting rationally to traumatic experiences in battle
- ❖ Psychological and emotional distress lies along an intensity continuum



Abnormality , Suffering or Dysfunction??

- ❖ Anxiety might be a normal rational reaction to extreme life events, or the loss of a close relationship.
- ❖ Someone refusing to eat might have anorexia or be on hunger strike. So are hunger-strikers mentally ill or rational political activists?



Questions

- ❖ Is psychological distress an illness or a normal part of being human?

Defining Mental Disorders



Historical Explanations of Madness

When/Who	Cause	Treatment
Prehistoric	Evil spirits/ pressure in the brain	Trepanation
Early Egypt	Loss of status	Talking it out, religion, status
Old Testament	Despair/incorrect thinking	Faith
Aechylus	Demons	Exorcism
Socrates	Heaven sent	None- it is a blessing!
Aristotle	Melancholia	Abstain from excess: diet and exercise
Celsus	Madness is madness	Entertaining stories, diversion and persuasion
Galen	Function of the brain	Confrontation, humour, exercise

Have Attitudes toward Mental Health Changed?

- ❖ Ancient Hebrew texts suggested that 'disease of the mind' was punishment from the Gods (1000-300 BC). Through to the Middle ages- Illness seen as God's punishment and the result of evil spirits entering the soul. Religion dominated and the Priest was significant in terms of treating illness.
- ❖ Hippocrates (Circa 460-377BC) Attributed illness to an imbalance of four circulatory bodily fluids called 'Humours': Yellow bile; Phlegm; Blood and Black bile. "It is more important to know what sort of person has a disease, than to know what sort of disease a person has."
- ❖ Galen (Circa AD 129-199) considered a physical basis for all ill health - Mind and Body are inter-related
- ❖ Asylum Movement - The 'Mentally ill' are presumed to be unpredictable and need to be locked away from society and quarantined
- ❖ Since 1970s, there has been a move away from an asylum-based system to Community Care.

What do we mean by Well-Being?

- ❖ physical and mental health and emotional well-being;
- ❖ protection from abuse and neglect;
- ❖ education, training and recreation;
- ❖ domestic, family and personal relationships;
- ❖ contribution made to society;
- ❖ securing rights and entitlements;
- ❖ social and economic well-being;
- ❖ suitability of living accommodation.

(Social Services and Well-being Act 2016)

Well-Being

In relation to a child, “well-being” also includes—

- ❖ physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development;
- ❖ “welfare” as that word is interpreted for the purposes of the Children Act 1989.

In relation to an adult, “well-being” also includes—

- ❖ control over day to day life;
- ❖ participation in work.

Bio-Medical Model of Mental Health



- ❖ Mental Illness understood through the study of physiological and neurological processes.
- ❖ Focus is on the symptoms underlying pathology.
- ❖ Medical models of mental health assume that the sufferer has become ‘abnormal’ and no longer conforms to supposedly ‘normal’ standards.
- ❖ The underlying principle is that the sick are deviating in some way from the medically ‘normal’

Bio-psycho-social Model of Health

- ❖ The view that disease and symptoms can be explained by a combination of physical, social, cultural and psychological factors



Approaches to Mental Health

- ❖ Some counsellors and psychotherapists take the purist view that psychotherapeutic explorations of emotional distress have nothing to do with medical models, but are merely part of the human condition.
- ❖ Whether emotional distress requires treatment (medical or non-medical) is a matter for debate.
- ❖ Psychopharmacology versus psychotherapy
- ❖ Phenomenology – the study of events without necessarily ascribing provable causes. Exploring inner processes by investigating external effects

Approaches to Mental Health

- ❖ According to the BACP, people choose to see a counsellor because they are experiencing difficulty or distress in their lives (Driscoll, 2010)
- ❖ Whether this distress is an 'illness' or just part of being human might be further investigated by considering how much this distress affects their lives and the people around them
- ❖ 'The Fully-functioning person' (Carl Rogers)
- ❖ As psychological distress varies in intensity, so should the treatment.
- ❖ Wise practitioners assess, reassess and revise their approach

Interpersonal Factors



- ❖ Social support and relationships
- ❖ Social relationships can be an important buffer against stress
- ❖ Attachment Theory - John Bowlby believed that mental health and behavioural problems could be attributed to early childhood.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VAAMsqv2GV8#t=14>
- ❖ Transactional Analysis (TA) - Eric Berne
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBO38HqQTgl>

Sociocultural Factors



- ❖ Research show us how sociocultural factors such as gender, race, culture, ethnicity and socio-economic status can contribute to psychological disorders.
- ❖ Environmental factors can trigger, exacerbate or maintain symptoms.
- ❖ Social Constructionism-Health is understood in terms of the language people use, the 'archaeology' of understanding is expressed in words and how they position themselves within cultural discourse.

(Kring, Johnson, Davison & Neale, 2013)

Sociological Approaches to Mental Health

- ❖ Sociological – Result of the sickness in society
- ❖ Functionalism – Concerned with the smooth running of society. Talcott Parsons introduced the concept of the 'Sick Role' in order to minimise the disruptive impact illness has on society.
- ❖ Parsons suggested that adopting the 'sick role' provides the sick person with rights and responsibilities
- ❖ Marxism – Health and illness benefits capitalism. Medicine is part of the capitalist system providing direct or indirect employment and reproducing inequalities therein. Work within the capitalist system is unrewarding and a cause of ill-health
- ❖ Feminism – concerned with women's unequal position in society, medical profession is largely dominated by men, Marxist feminists see medicine as maintaining the existing order of capitalism

Sociological Approaches to Mental Health

- ❖ **Symbolic Interactionism** – Concerned with how we interpret social situations and how individuals define themselves as ill. 'Clinical Iceberg' exists because not everyone defines themselves as ill, considers socio-cultural factors.
- ❖ **Postmodernism** – focus on the rapid changes in society, such as the nuclear family, religion, Diversity, people choose their own way of life
- ❖ **Collectivism** – A Commitment to society, normally through governments providing care needs of vulnerable members of community.
- ❖ **New Right** – The view that the state should play as small a role as possible in the care of vulnerable, emphasising self-care and resilience.

Emotions and Psychopathology



- ❖ Emotions influence how we respond to challenge in our environment and help us organise our thoughts and actions explicitly and implicitly.
- ❖ Emotions comprise of a number of components including expressive, experiential and physiological components.
- ❖ The term 'affect' is used to describe short-lasting emotional feelings
- ❖ 'Moods' are emotional experiences that endure for a longer period of time.
- ❖ Emotion influences thinking and behaviour
- ❖ 'Ideal emotions' vary in cultures.



What is Welsh Government doing?

- ❖ Early intervention is universally recognised as the best form of prevention
- ❖ More holistic, recovery centred approaches
- ❖ Focus on building resiliency
- ❖ Flying start, Family First and integrated family support initiatives
- ❖ School-based counselling
- ❖ Mental Health First Aid Training, Applied Suicide Intervention Training (ASIST)
- ❖ Mental Health Promotion
- ❖ Healthy Working Wales Scheme
- ❖ Criminal Justice Liaison Teams
- ❖ Assertive Outreach Services
- ❖ Community Intensive intervention teams

Mental Disorders

- ❖ Are they a social 'sickness' caused by the age we live in?
- ❖ Are they a learned or acquired condition that results from social and personal pressure?
- ❖ Are they really mental disorders?
- ❖ Or are they just another of our modern 'manufactured complaints' that help drug companies sell more pills?

Exercise

- ❖ Draw up a list of behaviours that you commonly exhibit. The normal activities go on list a and the abnormal behaviours go on list b
- ❖ Compare notes with a partner

Essential Reading

- ❖ Claringbull, N., 2010. What is Counselling and Psychotherapy? Exeter: Learning Matters. ebook.
- ❖ Feltham, C. and Horton, I., 2012. The Sage Handbook of Counselling and Psychotherapy. London: Sage.
- ❖ McLeod, J., 2009. An Introduction to Counselling. 4th Ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press. ebook.
- ❖ Woolfe, R., Strawbridge, S., Douglas, B. and Dryden, W., 2010. Handbook of Counselling Psychology 3rd ed. London: Sage.p83-173
