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Factsheet MH3 Types of mental illness other than neurosis and psychosis

There are other types of mental illness which are different to neurotic and psychotic illness as described in fact sheet 8a.

Personality Disorder

Every person has their own unique personality consisting of different thoughts, feelings and behaviour and will respond to situations in their own individual way. Throughout life a person's personality does not alter significantly but may mature as they get older and adapt to suit their circumstances. Most people will learn from past experiences and change their behaviour in order to cope with life better.

A person with a personality disorder may have difficulty in adapting to changing situations as patterns of thinking; feeling and behaviour are very fixed. This is a complex condition which can result in significant difficulty in coping with life. Often people with personality disorder can have different beliefs and attitudes to other people. They may behave in a way that is unusual, unexpected, chaotic, offensive or self destructive causing distress to themselves or others. Common problems can be struggles to maintain relationships or interpret social cues.

A personality disorder can be caused by trauma in childhood such as neglect, loss of a parent, sexual or physical abuse. It is not clearly understood why some people with have the same experiences in childhood but not develop personality difficulties in adult life.

Organic Disorder

This is different to other forms of mental illness and is a disorder of the brain which causes a loss of brain function. Damage to the brain may have been sudden as a result of an accident or due to a prolonged illness such as *dementia*.

Dementia: this is a blanket term for a group of progressive illnesses which results in the brain's structure and chemistry becoming increasingly damaged over time. There are over a hundred different types of dementia illness but the most common are Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia and Lewy bodies. The majority of dementia illnesses are not curable however there are medications available which can lessen some symptoms of Alzheimer's. Although dementia is most frequently diagnosed in older adults it can sometimes also affect middle aged adults.

Dementia will cause a decline in a person's ability to remember, communicate, reason and understand.

Mental illness as a result of illicit drug use

Some people who use illicit (illegal or street) drugs may develop a condition with symptoms that are the same as psychotic illnesses as described in fact sheet 2. For some a *drug induced psychosis* may be a short lived illness but for others it may be a trigger for a longer term problem. Illicit drugs may also aggravate the symptoms of a person who already have a mental illness.

Where can I go for more information?

MIND (for comprehensive information on all mental illnesses) 15-19 Broadway London E15 4BQ Tel: 0845 766 0163

www.mind.org.uk

Making Space (a charity based in the north of the country who provide good online information) www.makingspace.co.uk

Depression Alliance 212 Spitfire Studios 63-71 Collier Street London N1 9BE Tel: 0845 1232320 www.depressionalliance.org

Royal College of Psychiatrists www.rcpsych.ac.uk

No Panic (info on panic attacks phobias, OCD and anxiety) Tel: 0808 808 0545 (10am-10pm) www.nopanic.org.uk

Alzheimers Society Gordon House 10 Greencoat Place London SW1P 1PH Tel: 020 7306 0606 www.alzheimers.org.uk

Saneline (info on mental illness and the impact of drugs) Sane 1st Floor Cityside House 40 Alder Street London E1 1EE Tel: 020 7375 1002 (1pm-11pm) www.sane.org.uk