Mental Health

Good mental health is important in helping us function appropriately and effectively in all aspects of our lives. Many people enjoy a lifetime of good mental health whilst some experience mental health problems for short or long periods of time.

Most mental health problems can be managed and treated effectively and it may involve counselling, behavioural or environmental modifications and/or the use of medications.

Check this out:

It is estimated that one in five Australians will experience a mental illness disorder at some point in their life. The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that by 2020, depression will be the second biggest disease after Heart disease.

THE NATURE OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

Mental illness is defined as a disease or condition that affects a person’s ability to cope with daily tasks and one which affects a person’s social, emotional or cognitive capacity to function. As a result, the mentally ill person may not be able to interact well with others.

There are two main categories of mental illness and they are:

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<th>Psychotic</th>
<th>To see, hear, taste and smell things that are not there; the emotions may be inappropriate, exaggerated or change for no apparent reason.</th>
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<td>Examples: schizophrenia</td>
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<th>Non-Psychotic</th>
<th>To have exaggerated feelings such as anxiety, depression and fear.</th>
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<td>Examples: obsessive-compulsive disorder, phobias, depression</td>
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Select one Psychotic and Non-Psychotic illness and research its cause, symptoms and effects on the individual.
WHAT CAUSES MENTAL ILLNESS?

There are 3 main factors that cause mental illness:

1. Genetic make up

Some cases of mental illness have been linked to a set of genes that adds to their chances of developing a mental illness. The chances of having a mental illness is greater if one or more of your parents have the gene HOWEVER it DOES NOT necessarily mean that you will develop the symptoms or illness.

2. Chemical or biological imbalances

Chemicals work in the body to help the body function correctly. The brain uses the body’s nervous system to send messages about the body. Neurotransmitters are chemicals that carry messages from the brain cells to the body. If these chemicals have an imbalance the wrong messages can get through and may cause the person to think or act strangely.

3. Environmental factors

Environmental factors are situations or events that happen around a person. Environmental factors that can trigger a mental illness include stressful life events, undue pressure and the use of illicit or illegal drugs.

Complete the worksheet on "John" and answer the questions in full sentences in your workbooks.

Factors that Support Mental Health

A range of factors has helped improve people’s mental health and increased our understanding of mental illnesses. These include:

- Anti-bullying policies in schools and workplaces
- Employment if counsellors in schools
- Anti-discrimination laws
- Improved medication
- Laws and actions that reduce access to illegal drugs

There are a range of organisations that provide services that are specifically dedicated to promoting and assisting the mental health of young people. These can be accessed via the school counsellor, public hospitals,