

# Module 19 – Mental Health

## Introduction

Typically, home care aides will provide care to the frail, elderly or handicapped population. At times, the individual may also have a mental illness, or the home care aide is needed specifically because the individual has a mental illness. It is essential that the home care aide understand mental illness and the needs of the individual so that optimal care is provided.

## Objectives

At the end of the module, the nurse aide will be able to:

1. Recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness
2. Explain treatment options for mental illness
3. Describe the home care aide's role in helping patients manage symptoms and illness
4. Discuss stigma and discrimination against individuals with mental health issues

## Instructional Resource Materials

- Power Point for Module 19 – Mental Illness
- Handouts/Activity
- Activity #1 – Words Are Important
  - Faculty – **Prior to class**, read article, *It's time to stop using these phrases when it comes to mental illness*, from The Huffington Post. The article is in the file named Module 19 MH Words are important article for faculty
  - Discuss portions of the article that relate to the home care aide's role; some points in the article are highlighted in yellow
  - Refer students to the Words Are Important worksheet; ask students to author some preferred language and document in the second column
  - Review the answer table with students. Ask students to share their answers but do not push a student if he/she does not want to share. If responses are not in person-first or person-centered language, work with the student to make the response person-centered without telling the student he/she is wrong. Reviewing the preferred language **prior to teaching** the module would be helpful for the instructor.

## Module 19 – Mental Health

Slides	Instructor's Script	Notes
<b>Slide 1</b> Title Slide	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 19 – Mental Health</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 2</b>	<b>Script</b> <b>Objectives</b> - At the end of the module, the nurse aide will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness</li> <li>2. Explain treatment options for mental illness</li> <li>3. Describe the home care aide's role in helping patients manage symptoms and illness</li> <li>4. Discuss stigma and discrimination against individuals with mental health issues</li> </ol>	
<b>Slide 3</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Module 19-A – Signs and symptoms of mental illness</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 4</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As a home care aide, you will work with patients with many different physical ailments and conditions. However, one's physical issues cannot be separated from one's psychological issues. They are part of a person and make up who that patient is.</li> <li>• Mental illness can affect anyone at any time. It can be chronic and life-long (for example, schizophrenia or bipolar disorder) or can affect someone situationally (for example, depression can affect a patient when diagnosed with a debilitating medical condition or after the death of a loved one).</li> <li>• Mental illness, also known as a mental health condition, has had misconceptions and unfavorable press in the past; however, having a mental illness, or a mental health condition, is quite common and nothing to be ashamed of. As always, when working with patients, it is important to be open-minded and understanding of their conditions, both physically and emotionally.</li> </ul>	
<b>Slide 5</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Handout #1 – Key Terms and Definitions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Faculty – go over handout with students. Ask if there are questions and clarify any terms that are unclear.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Activity #1 – Words Are Important</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Faculty – Prior to class, read article, <i>It's time to stop using these phrases when it comes to mental illness</i> from The Huffington Post.</li> <li>○ Discuss portions that relate to the home care aide's role prior to students filling out <b>Words Are Important</b> worksheet.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

## Module 19 – Mental Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Direct students to write their ideas about preferred words in the second column</li><li>○ Review the answer table with students.</li></ul>	
<b>Slide 6</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are certain mental health conditions that a home care aide may encounter more than others.</li><li>• If your patients are suffering from a physical, chronic illness, it is common that they may experience some level of depression.</li><li>• Depression is considered an affective disorder, meaning it deals with feelings, moods, and emotions.</li><li>• Depression can be mild and situational, or it can be considered a major depressive disorder.</li><li>• When someone is depressed, they can exhibit a wide variety of symptoms, including:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Persistent sadness, tearfulness, or “empty” mood</li><li>○ Restlessness, irritability</li><li>○ Expressions of guilt, worthlessness, hopelessness and/or helplessness</li><li>○ Decreased energy, fatigue, being “slowed down”</li><li>○ Loss of interest in any pleasurable hobbies and activities/does not find pleasure in any activities</li><li>○ Trouble concentrating, remembering, making decisions</li><li>○ Changes in sleeping: difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping</li><li>○ Changes in appetite and/or unintended weight changes</li><li>○ Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems, including constipation, without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment</li><li>○ Anxiety</li></ul></li><li>• Depression affects more than 6.5 million (18.5%) of the 35 million Americans aged 65 years and older. Depression in the elderly is often unrecognized and under-diagnosed.</li><li>• According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), depression affects about 1%-5% of the general older adult population (60 years and older), 13.5% in older adults who require home healthcare, and 11.5% in older adult hospital patients.</li><li>• While anxiety can be a symptom of depression, it can also be a main mental condition for a patient. Anxiety and depression can go together; however, they can be experienced separately.</li><li>• Like depression, there are various levels of anxiety, with some being mild, and others being debilitating. Symptoms include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Feeling uneasy and/or unpleasant</li></ul></li></ul>	

## Module 19 – Mental Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Feeling worried for no real reason</li><li>○ Experiencing a sense of danger or panic</li><li>○ Physical symptoms such as stomach pain/nausea, diarrhea, rapid pulse, dry mouth, sweating</li><li>○ Poor attention span</li><li>○ Sleeping changes</li><li>○ Eating changes</li><li>○ Shortness of breath</li><li>○ Chest pain</li></ul>	
Slide 7	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Anxiety can also lead to phobias. A phobia is an intense fear of a situation, person, or thing.</li><li>• <b>Activity #2 – Common Phobias</b> – Have the students work on the activity independently to see how many of the phobias they can figure out. Discuss the answers out loud after giving the students time to work.</li></ul>	
Slide 8	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• While depression and/or anxiety may be the most common mental issues a home care aide may encounter with home care patients, there are additional mental health conditions that an aide may see.</li><li>• Schizophrenia is a term that historically has been misunderstood. Schizophrenia does not mean that a patient has multiple personalities of which he or she is unaware (that is called dissociative identity disorder and is uncommon). Instead, schizophrenia refers to a mental condition in which the person has an altered sense of reality. Some common traits include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ False beliefs or delusions (e.g. person believes they are someone they are not; person believes their every move is being watched by the FBI)</li><li>○ Auditory and/or visual hallucinations (hearing or seeing things that are not there)</li><li>○ Paranoia (e.g. person believes someone is trying to kill them)</li><li>○ Communication problems/rambling speech</li><li>○ Social withdrawal</li></ul></li><li>• Bipolar disorder is another condition that can be easily misunderstood. With bipolar disorder, a person can have severe mood disruptions. The person can be manic or high, depressed or low, or alter between the two. It is possible that a person can be more manic than depressed, and vice versa.</li><li>• Symptoms of a manic episode include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Excitability</li><li>○ High energy level</li><li>○ Sleeplessness</li><li>○ More spending than usual</li></ul></li></ul>	

## Module 19 – Mental Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Irresponsible behaviors and/or risk taking</li><li>● Symptoms of a depressive episode include those same symptoms of depression as outlined above, except the symptom occur quickly and feel extreme:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Deep sadness</li><li>○ Loneliness</li><li>○ Thoughts of suicide</li><li>○ Expressions of hopelessness and helplessness</li></ul></li></ul>	
Slide 9	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Other mental health issues:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Substance use disorder, formerly known as substance abuse, is also considered a mental health condition when the person is psychologically addicted to the substance. A physical addiction is when a person has physical withdrawal symptoms if the substance is removed or stopped. A psychological addiction is when a person feels they need the substance and while they have no physical symptoms, they feel they cannot cope without the drug. Home care patients could have either type of substance use conditions.</li><li>○ Eating disorders can be an issue as well. Anorexia nervosa is when a person has a distorted view of himself/herself and has a fear of weight gain, and therefore stops eating. Bulimia is when a person also has the same fears, but instead binge eats. After binge eating, the person either vomits or takes diuretics or laxatives to rid the body of the food just consumed.</li><li>○ Personality disorders are common; however, they can vary widely as far as how well the person is able to function in society. Personality disorders are usually characterized by a person's rigid, inflexible approach to life and situations. They are focused inward on themselves. They can usually be characterized by exhibiting odd/eccentric behaviors, dramatic/emotional behaviors, or anxious/fearful behaviors.</li></ul></li></ul>	
Slide 10	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Module 19-B – Possible treatment options</b></li></ul>	
Slide 11	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● There are many treatment options for someone with a mental health condition. Most involve some sort of therapy to assist in allowing and encouraging the exploration of feelings and thought processes:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Individual psychotherapy</li><li>○ Group psychotherapy</li></ul></li></ul>	

## Module 19 – Mental Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Family psychotherapy</li><li>○ Art therapy</li><li>○ Occupational therapy</li><li>● In recent years, alternative therapies have proven to be helpful for certain issues. For example, acupuncture and healing touch can be used to assist with the symptoms associated with anxiety.</li></ul>	
Slide 12	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Medications may also be prescribed to assist with certain symptoms, with depression and anxiety being the disorders for which medications are most prescribed. It is important to remember that medications are used to treat symptoms and are not a comprehensive treatment for mental health conditions.</li></ul>	
Slide 13	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● It is most helpful when a person combines treatments. For example, simply putting someone on an anti-depressant may not give him/her relief as soon as someone who is on an anti-depressant and is in individual therapy simultaneously. Likewise, medications can take up to 4 – 6 weeks to work, while therapy can be helpful immediately.</li></ul>	
Slide 14	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Module 19-C – The home care aide's role in helping patients manage symptoms and illness</b></li></ul>	
Slide 15	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The home care aide is there to help ensure the patient's needs are met. This includes mental health needs. The home care aide can be of assistance by reminding the patient about his or her treatment and watching for anything out of the ordinary. The home care aide can assist with medication reminders, keeping an eye out for medication side effects, changes in behavior, unusual comments, etc. The nurse involved will outline specifics on the plan of care, and the home care aide should not deviate from that plan of care.</li><li>● Older patients or patients who have other conditions may be taking medications for other issues. Therefore, it is important to watch for drug interactions or negative side effects.</li><li>● Patients with a mental illness need to be seen by a professional. Whether they are suffering from depression or an eating disorder, they could be emotionally fragile and will need specialized care. Never give advice or play the role of the therapist in the</li></ul>	

## Module 19 – Mental Health

	<p>patient's life. It is also important to remember professional boundaries.</p>	
Slide 16	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>It is important for the home care aide to know that a patient may not be aware of how they are dealing with their psychological stressors. Most people use what are called defense mechanisms as a way of coping or dealing with a situation. Patients will be unaware they are using these strategies to work out or deal with their issues. Home care aides should never take a patient's personal issues or things they may say personally or take on the issue themselves. It may just be that patient's way of dealing with stress.</li><li><b>Handout #2 – Defense Mechanisms</b></li><li>Read over the handout. Ask the students if they recognize any of the defense mechanisms – whether they know someone else who has used them or if they themselves have used one unknowingly in the past.</li><li><b>Optional Activity for Handout #2</b> – Break students into groups. Assign each group 2 or 3 defense mechanisms. Have students generate examples of the defense mechanism they are assigned. Discuss as a group.</li></ul>	
Slide 17	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The home care aide can also assist the patient as he/she would with any other patient – be sure the patient gets plenty of rest, eats well balanced meals, and is physically cared for the best way possible, stays mentally active, has activities to do, spends time with others, etc. If a patient's life is stable and in order, it will help with the potential mental turmoil they may be experiencing.</li><li>It is also important to take care of yourself. If you have been diagnosed with a mental health condition or feel you may have signs or symptoms of a mental health condition, medical treatment is important. Many individuals live healthy lives while on treatment. Contact your physician or LME (local management entity) for assistance.</li></ul>	
Slide 18	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Stigmatization and discrimination against the mentally ill have occurred for thousands of years. People with mental illness were imprisoned, tortured, or killed.</li><li>In the Middle Ages, mental illness was considered to be a punishment from God; sufferers were burned at the stake because it was thought they were possessed by</li></ul>	

## Module 19 – Mental Health

	<p>the devil, or thrown in penitentiaries and madhouses where they were chained to the walls or their beds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• During the Age of Enlightenment in Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries, the mentally ill were finally freed from their chains and institutions were established to help them.</li><li>• During the Late Modern Era, stigmatization and discrimination reached an unfortunate peak during the Nazi reign in Germany when hundreds of thousands of mentally ill people were murdered or sterilized. The Nazi reign was in power from 1933 – 1945.</li></ul>	
<b>Slide 19</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Most recently, people living with mental health conditions are:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ Given the same social distance as criminals.</li><li>◦ Perceived as individuals that should be feared.</li><li>◦ Seen as irresponsible, childlike, and unable to make their own decisions.</li><li>◦ Less likely to be hired.</li><li>◦ Less likely to get safe housing.</li><li>◦ More likely to be criminalized than offered health care services.</li><li>◦ Afraid of rejection to the point that they do not always pursue opportunities or help with their mental health condition.</li></ul></li></ul>	
<b>Slide 20</b>	<p><b>Script</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Everyone knows a little about mental health issues but knowing the facts can help you educate others and reject stigmatizing stereotypes. Mental health issues are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing. Understanding mental health is not only about being able to identify symptoms and having a name for conditions but setting aside false ideas about mental health conditions as well.</li><li>2) 1 in 5 Americans lives with a mental health condition and each of them has their own story, path and journey that says more about them than their diagnosis does. Whether you are a friend, family member, caregiver, or medical professional, getting to know a person and treating them with kindness and empathy means far more than just knowing what they are going through.</li></ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>HANDOUT #3:</b> How do we stop stigma? Conversation. Try these simple tips for talking. <b>Instructors:</b> Review handout with students. Challenge students to come up with additional inclusive statements (similar to Do Say column).</li><li>• <b>Optional Video:</b> An individual with a mental health condition talks about hurtful words (2:04 minutes)</li></ul>	

## Module 19 – Mental Health

	<a href="https://player.vimeo.com/Hurtful%20Words">https://player.vimeo.com/Hurtful Words</a>	
<b>Slide 21</b>	<b>Script</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Even though mental health conditions affect millions of people from every background and age group, it is still misunderstood and highly stigmatized in our society. If you practice person-first language and educate yourself and others, you can contribute to decreasing the stigma and discrimination against persons with a mental illness. As always, never judge your patients or treat them differently due to their illness or condition</li></ul>	