



HIV/AIDS and Mental Health



HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- Mental health- emotional, psychological, and social well-being
- Mental health affects how you think, feel, and act
- Can determine how you handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- **Why is Positive Mental Health Important for People Living with HIV/AIDS?**
 - function better at work, at school, and in relationships.
 - cope more effectively with life's challenges; such as the death of a loved one, ending a relationship, job stress, health issues, and family or financial problems.
 - take better care of physical health.
 - maintain healthy balance

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- If you are living with HIV/AIDS, mental health problems can affect your physical health by:
 - Create barriers in medical adherence.
 - making it harder for you to keep your health appointments or take advantage of your support network.
 - interfering with your healthy behaviors, such as getting enough sleep and exercise and avoiding risk behaviors such as having unprotected sex.
 - impairing your ability to cope with the stresses of daily life.

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- For persons living with HIV/AIDS, it is important for them to be aware that there is an increased risk for developing mood, anxiety, and cognitive disorders. **These conditions are treatable. People who experience mental health problems can get better and many recover completely.**

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- Possible signs of mental health issues are:
 - No longer finding enjoyment in activities which usually make you happy
 - Withdrawing from social interaction
 - Change in memory functioning
 - Sleeping too much—or being unable to sleep
 - Feeling “sad” or “empty” much of the time
 - Feeling guilty
 - Feeling tired all the time
 - Panic attacks
 - Having racing thoughts
 - Loss of sexual interest
 - Worrying what others are thinking about you
 - Hearing voices in your head
 - Feelings of wanting to hurt yourself or others
 - Intense anger or rage toward others

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- Most mental health problems are caused by a combination of family history and environmental, biological, and *psychosocial* factors.
- Some common factors include;
 - a family history of mental health problems and/or genetic factors.
 - stressful life events or psychosocial reasons, including trauma, sexual and physical abuse, neglect, and illness.
 - psychological factors such as unhealthy thinking patterns and trouble managing feelings.

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- Forms of stress can contribute to mental health problems for people living with HIV/AIDS, these can include:
 - Accessing services.
 - loss of social support/isolation.
 - loss of employment or worries about whether you will be able to perform your work as you did before.
 - Disclosure of status to others .
 - Managing HIV/AIDS medicine regiment.
 - Experiencing changes in physical appearance or abilities due to HIV/AIDS.
 - loss, including the loss of relationships or even death.
 - stigma and discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- ***Antiretroviral therapy*** also can affect mental health in different ways
 - **Pros**: Can relieve your anxiety because knowing that you are taking care of yourself can give you a sense of security
 - **Cons**: cause a variety of symptoms, including depression, anxiety, and sleep disturbance, and may make some mental health issues worse.

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- The HIV/AIDS virus itself also can contribute to mental health problems.
- Some *opportunistic infections* (which occur when the immune system is damaged by HIV/AIDS) can affect the nervous system and lead to changes in behavior and functioning.

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- **Depression**

- one of the most common mental health conditions experienced by people living with HIV/AIDS
- more than just a feeling of being "down in the dumps" or "blue" for a few days
- Brain disorder
- Caused by genetic, environmental, psychological, and/or biochemical factors

HIV/AIDS and Mental Health

- **How is depression treated in people who have HIV/AIDS?**
 - Diagnosed and treated by a health care provider.
 - Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT),
 - Medication/ Antidepressants (Zoloft, Cymbalta)
 - People with HIV/AIDS and depression should talk with their health care provider about side effects, possible drug interactions, and other treatment options

This Is Just The Beginning

Questions

?

Thanks For Listening

Kerry C Johnson, Psy.D., LPC, NCC