

Mental Health Glossary for Schools



addiction

A condition in which the body requires a drug in order to function without physical and psychological reactions to its absence. Addiction is often the outcome of tolerance and dependence and in severe cases may lead to some forms of abuse. There are different types of addiction. People can be, for instance, addicted to alcohol, smoking, drugs, sex, work, games, gambling, shopping, TV and internet.

!⚠ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

alienation

Estrangement, segregation or isolation that an individual can feel when the situation or group they are in is perceived as foreign, unpredictable, or unacceptable.

anxiety

A mental state and intense emotional response characterized by a feeling of preoccupation and fear, more or less intense and enduring. It can be connected to a specific stimulus that can be either internal or external.

Anxiety disorders

Separate from anxiety, this is a whole class of diagnosed mental disorders containing any disorder in which anxiety is the primary feature. These disorders are also marked by physiological arousal, strong feelings of tension, and intense apprehension and excessive worry without apparent reason. These symptoms can cause avoidance of everyday activities and cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

!⚠ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

apathy

Lack of feeling, emotion, interest, or concern.

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assertiveness

The ability to express personal emotions and opinions in a clear and efficient fashion, without offending or tackling the interlocutor.

assessment (mental health or psychiatric)

A professional review of the client's needs. An assessment is done when services are first sought from an individual and always before starting any type of treatment. The assessment normally identifies strengths and weaknesses of the individual. After the assessment is carried out, the client and the professional decide what kind of treatment and supports, if any, are needed.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)

A group of behavioral symptoms that include inattentiveness, hyperactivity and impulsiveness. ADHD can occur in people of any intellectual ability. People with ADHD may also have additional problems, such as sleep and anxiety disorders. Most cases are diagnosed in children between the ages of 6 and 12.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

autism

Also called autistic disorder; this, is a complex life-long developmental disability that presents itself in early childhood, usually before age 3. Autism prevents children and adolescents from interacting normally with other people and affects almost every aspect of their social and psychological development.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

behavioral activation

This is a type of behavior therapy for treating depression. It encourages clients to activate and develop skills and positive behaviors. The aim is to give the individual the opportunity to fill one's life with value and meaning, thanks to the positive reinforcement played by behaviors.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

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behavioral therapy

A type of treatment which focuses on changing unwanted behaviors through rewards, reinforcements, and desensitization. Desensitization, or Exposure Therapy, is a process of confronting something that arouses anxiety, discomfort, or fear and overcoming the unwanted responses. Behavioral therapy often involves the cooperation of others, especially family and close friends, to reinforce a desired behavior. Also see: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

bipolar disorder

A severe mood disorder. Sufferers have pathological mood swings from depression – where one feels very low and lethargic – to mania – where one feels very high and overactive. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders describes two types of bipolar disorder, type I and type II. In type I (formerly known as manic depressive disorder), there has been at least one full manic episode. However, people with this type may also experience episodes of major depression. In type II disorder, periods of “hypomania” involve more attenuate (less severe) manic symptoms that alternate with at least one major depressive episode.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

body image

One's sense of the self and one's body. Sometimes used in relation to certain eating and/or mood disorders.

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borderline personality disorder	A personality disorder with characteristics both from neurosis and psychosis. It implies extreme inability to process, tolerate and regulate emotions with subsequent difficulties and disruption in interpersonal relationships, behaviors, long-term planning, and the individual's sense of self-identity.	!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional
bulimia nervosa	An eating disorder characterized by the attempt to control their weight or remove guilt from eating by binge eating followed by measures to purge the body of the excess calories by deliberately being sick or using laxatives (medication to help empty their bowels).	!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional
burn-out	The pathological result of the prolonged stress that certain professionals undergo, especially those who are involved in helping relationships (eg. Teachers, psychologists, psychiatrists, nurses and support workers).	
client-centered therapy	Client-centered Therapy A humanistic approach to treatment that emphasizes the healthy psychological growth of the individual; based on the assumption that all people share the basic tendency of human nature toward self-actualization.	
clinical psychologist	A clinical psychologist is a professional with a doctoral degree in Psychology and whose training is in the assessment and treatment of psychological problems.	
cognitive neuroscience	An academic field that scientifically studies the neural substrates of mental processes.	

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cognitive therapy

Cognitive therapy aims to identify and correct distorted thinking patterns that can lead to feelings and behaviors that may be troublesome, self-defeating, or even self-destructive. This therapy focuses on replacing the distortions with more salient or realistic thoughts that, in turn, leads to more fulfilling and productive behavior. Also see: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

cognitive-behavioral therapy

A combination of cognitive and behavioral therapies. This approach helps people change negative thought patterns, beliefs, and behaviors so they can manage symptoms and enjoy more productive, less stressful lives. Also see: Behavioral Therapy and Cognitive Therapy.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

comorbidity

The simultaneous appearance of two or more illnesses, such as the co-occurrence of alcohol dependence and depression. The association may or may not reflect a causal relationship between one disorder and another or an underlying vulnerability to both disorders.

compassion

Sensitivity towards our and other people's suffering, underlined by a deep commitment to alleviate it. Also related to empathy or sympathy.

compulsion

The repetitive behavior or mental action that a person feels obliged to do in order to prevent or reduce distress or prevent some dreaded events (like hand washing, checking locks or praying). The person feels driven to perform such actions in response to an obsession, even though the behaviors are recognized to be excessive or unreasonable. See: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

!△ can be more serious, can require professional

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confidentiality

Confidentiality in medical care refers to protections (which may be legal, eg. Common Law of Confidentiality, Data Protection Act 1998, Human Rights Act 1998...) which prevent physicians from revealing certain discussions with patients, even under oath in court. It is central to trust between doctors and patients and key to NHS contracts and required practice (NHS Code of Practice, 2003). Patients generally have the right to object to the use and disclosure of confidential information that identifies them, but it is not absolute, according to the General Medical Council (2009). Doctors may disclose personal information if: a) it is required by law b) the patient consents – either implicitly for the sake of their own care or expressly for other purposes c) it is justified in the public interest.

counseling psychologist

Psychologist who specializes in providing guidance in areas such as vocational selection, school problems, drug abuse, and marital conflict.

delusion

Delusion A false or irrational belief based on incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly sustained despite what almost everyone else believes and despite what constitutes incontrovertible and obvious proof or evidence to the contrary. The belief is not one ordinarily accepted by other members of the person's culture or subculture (eg. it is not an article of religious faith).

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dementia

Dementia A chronic, persistent medical disorder due to brain damage caused for example by a series of strokes. It's characterized by a set of symptoms that may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, memory, problem-solving, personality changes or language. Dementia mainly affects people over the age of 65 though it is possible to have dementia at a younger age. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia but not all dementia is due to Alzheimer's.

depression

A psycho-physical state characterized by deep sadness, low self-esteem, reduction of interest and pleasure in the activities that normally interest the individual, lack of energy and reduced ability to concentrate. These symptoms are sometimes accompanied by suicidal thoughts.

diagnosis

Clinical process of evaluating the physical (medical diagnosis) and/or psychological functioning (psychological diagnosis) of the individual. It can be carried out through various tests, interviews and anamneses; the result is identification of the patient's cause of symptoms and solutions.

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)

DSM is the diagnostic and statistical manual of the American Psychiatric Association. It codifies psychiatric conditions and is used worldwide as a guide for diagnosing disorders. The categories used in the DSM are accepted by most official organizations including hospitals, insurance companies and other institutions. Currently on the Fifth Edition (DSM-5):
<http://www.psychiatry.org/psychiatrists/practice/dsm>

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dialectical behavior therapy (DBT)

This is a type of therapy used to successfully treat borderline-personality disorders. It aims to reduce dysfunctional behaviors, increase emotional regulation skills, tolerate distress and increase motivation both in the client and the therapist. In order to do this, this approach focuses on acceptance, on behaviors that interfere with the therapy, on the therapeutic relationship and on dialectical processes.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

discharge

Discharge A discharge is the formal termination of service, generally when treatment has been completed or through administrative authority.

dissociation

A disruption in the usually integrated functions of memory, identity, consciousness, or perception of the environment. When there is a dissociation, some aspects of one's psychic processes remain separated from the whole psychological system of the individual. This can happen, for example, in the face of traumatic experiences

dissociative identity disorder (DID)

Dissociative identity disorder (DID) A dissociative mental disorder in which two or more distinct personalities exist within the same individual; formerly known as multiple personality disorder.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

distress

A general term used to indicate damaging, excessive or pathogenic (disease producing) stress that impact a personal level of functioning. This means that it interferes with one's activities of daily living. Sadness, anxiety, distraction, and symptoms of mental illness are manifestations of psychological distress. Life situations such as: bereavement, stress, lack of sleep, use of drugs or alcohol, assault, abuse or accident can induce mental distress.

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early intervention

In mental health, early intervention refers to diagnosing and treating mental illnesses early in their development. Studies have shown early intervention can result in higher recovery rates. However, many individuals do not have the advantage of early intervention because the stigma of mental illness and other factors keep them from pursuing help until later in the illness' development.

eating disorders

Eating disorders are characterized by an abnormal attitude towards food that causes someone to change their eating habits and behavior. A person with an eating disorder may focus excessively on their weight and shape, leading them to make unhealthy choices about food with damaging results to their health. Eating disorders do not necessarily result in weight loss, a common misconception

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

efficacy

In the context of mental health disorders, efficacy refers to a person's belief in his or her ability to complete a future task or solve a future problem

electroconvulsive therapy
(electroshock)

A treatment for some severe mental illnesses in which a brief application of electrical stimulus is used to generate a generalized seizure. According to the National Institutes of Health, this therapy has been highly successful in treating certain types of depression, especially when followed with anti-depressant medication. It has not been effective with individuals who have less severe forms of depression.

!△ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

self-consciousness

Implies the knowledge and recognition of one's personality, feelings, motives, and desires.

emotion

A strong feeling deriving from one's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others. It can lead to emotional reaction(s), acute and short-term, following an environmental stimulus.

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emotional dependency

The emotional dependency (or love addiction) is the obsessive search for love, characterized by excessive dependency and absence of reciprocity in the form of self-deprivation and over-involvement.

!⚠ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

emotional intelligence

Type of intelligence defined as the ability to perceive, recognize, understand and handle emotions accurately and appropriately in order to promote both emotional and intellectual growth.

empathy

Ability to share others' positive and negative emotions.

family therapy

This approach to therapy involves discussions and problem-solving sessions facilitated by a therapist sometimes involving an entire family group, sometimes with individuals. Such therapy can help those involved improve their understanding of, and the way they respond to, one another. Family therapy can help educate the individuals about the nature of mental disorders and teach them skills to cope better with the effects of having a family member with a mental illness - such as how to deal with feelings of anger or guilt.

!⚠ more serious, requires psychiatric professional

Gender dysphoria

A persistent aversion toward some or all of those physical characteristics or social roles that connote one's own biological sex.

Gender identity

A person's inner conviction of being male or female.

Gender role

Attitudes, patterns of behavior, and personality attributes defined by the culture in which the person lives as stereotypically "masculine" or "feminine" social roles.

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Generalized anxiety disorder	An anxiety disorder in which an individual feels anxious and worried most of the time for at least six months when not threatened by any specific danger or object. See: Anxiety disorders.
Gestalt psychology	A school of psychology according to which human experiences and psychological phenomena shouldn't be broken down into primitive perceptual elements but can be understood only when viewed as organized, structured wholes.
Group Therapy	This form of therapy usually involves groups of 4 to 12 people who have similar problems and who meet regularly with a therapist. The therapist uses the emotional interactions of the group's members to help them get relief from distress and possibly modify their behavior. For example see: Peer Support.
Hallucination	Phenomenon that makes people perceive sounds, images and smells (that are only products of their mind) as real. The person may or may not have insight into the fact that he or she is having a hallucination.
Helpline	Also known as hotlines, these are telephone services often set up by authorities or charities providing help, advice or comfort to individuals with problems.
Hypochondria	Excessive worrying and anxiety about one's health condition. Symptoms may be absent or minor but could be real. Hypochondria often persists even if the evaluated outcome of clinical examinations shows no medical illness or (if there is a medical illness) that there is no need to worry so much. In other words the person often cannot be reassured despite professional advice.
Idealization	A mental mechanism in which the person attributes exaggeratedly positive qualities to the self or others.

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Identity	This is the awareness held by an individual of a continuous and constant sense of self. The main components of identity are body image, subjective sense of a constant self, attitudes, genre, sexual identity, genuineness and ethnicity.
Illusion	A misperception of misinterpretation of a real external stimulus, such as hearing the rustling of leaves as the sound of voices
Individual Therapy	Therapy tailored for a patient/client that is administered one-on-one.
Inpatient	Patient that goes to a hospital and stays overnight or for an indeterminate time, usually several days or weeks. See also: Outpatient.
International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10)	A list of medically classified conditions and standard diagnostic tool for epidemiology, health management and clinical purposes- published by the World Health Organization (WHO). All WHO Member States use the ICD which has been translated into 43 languages.
Involuntary patient	A person admitted to a psychiatric facility against his or her will, such as under the Mental Health Act 1983.
Mania	A state characterized by excessive excitement, exalted feelings, delusions of grandeur, elevation of mood, psychomotor over-activity and over-production of ideas.
Medication	A drug or other type of medicine that is used for the prevention, alleviation or treatment of symptoms or disease. In mental health medication is often mentioned with reference to the prescription, administration, assessment of drug effectiveness and monitoring of side effects of psycho-tropic medications.

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Meditation	Mental process through which the individual reaches an increase self-knowledge and well-being by the experience of consciousness alteration.
Mental Capacity Act 2005	If someone can't make decisions for yourself because they do not have the mental capacity to make them, the Mental Capacity Act 2005 tells you what you can do to plan ahead, how you can ask someone else to make decisions for you and who can make decisions for you if you haven't planned ahead.
Mental health	This term refers to how a person maintains successful mental activity, productive daily activities and fulfilling relationships by the way they look at themselves, evaluate challenges and problems, explore choices and make decisions. Good mental health is not simply the absence of diagnosable mental health problems though it is likely to protect against developing such illnesses. Mental health and mental illness are not the same thing. See: Mental illness.
Mental Health Act 1983 (MHA)	A law that in England and Wales which allows people to be detained in hospital (sectioned), against their will, if they have a mental illness and need treatment. You can only be kept in hospital if certain conditions are met.
Mental Health Act Code of Practice	This tells health professionals how they should follow the Mental Health Act. It is not law, so it cannot be enforced by going to court, but health professionals should follow it unless there is a good reason not to. The Code covers some areas not specifically mentioned in the Mental Health Act 1983, such as visiting rights and the use of seclusion. If a health professional doesn't follow the Code, you can make a complaint.

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Mental Health Services Diagnostic, treatment and preventive services that help improve the way individuals with mental illness feel, both physically and emotionally, as well as the way they interact with others. These services also intervene on behalf of those who have a strong risk of developing a mental illness.

Mental Illness Mental illnesses refer to a wide range of clinically identifiable mental health conditions that affect one's thoughts, body, feelings, and behavior. They exhibit ongoing symptoms and cause frequent stress, affecting your day-to-day ability to function. Mental illnesses can be severe, seriously interfering with a person's life, and even causing a person to become disabled. Mental illnesses include (but are not limited to): Clinical depression, bipolar disorder (manic-depressive illness), attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, schizophrenia, and conduct disorder.

MENTAL WELLNESS

Mindfulness According to Jon Kabat-Zinn's definition, mindfulness means paying attention to the present moment, intentionally and in a non-judgmental fashion (1994).

Mood A pervasive and sustained emotion that colors the perception of the world. Common examples of mood include depression, elation, anger, and anxiety. In contrast to affect, which refers to more fluctuating changes in emotional "weather", mood refers to a more pervasive and sustained emotional "climate".

Mood disorder A mood disturbance such as severe depression or depression alternating with mania.

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Neurosis	A class of mental disorders involving distress but neither delusions nor hallucinations. Neurosis may also be called psychoneurosis or neurotic disorder
Obsession	Thought, impulse or image that is unwanted, invasive and repetitive and presents itself with frequency and appears to be irrational and uncontrollable. Persistent fears that harm may come to self or a loved one, an unreasonable concern with becoming contaminated, or an excessive need to do things correctly or perfectly, are common. See: Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)	Sufferers of OCD become trapped in a pattern of repetitive thoughts and behaviors that are senseless and distressing but extremely difficult to overcome. Compulsions are actions or responses to such obsessive thoughts. The most common of these are washing and checking on things. People with OCD show a range of insight into the senselessness of their obsessions and sometimes also suffer from depression, eating disorders, substance abuse disorder, a personality disorder, attention deficit disorder, or another of the anxiety disorders.
Outpatient	A patient who is hospitalized for less than 24 hours; those who do not need to stay overnight
Panic attack	Short, intense and sudden anxiety episode, characterized by anguish, intense apprehension, fearfulness, or terror, often associated with feelings of impending doom. During these attacks there are symptoms such as shortness of breath or smothering sensations; palpitations, pounding heart, or accelerated heart rate; chest pain or discomfort; choking; and fear of going crazy or losing control.

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Panic disorders	Many people experience panic attacks without further episodes or complications. People suffer from panic disorder when they experience frequent, unexpected panic attacks that aren't tied to a specific situation, they worry a lot about having another panic attack. Moreover, since they cannot predict when a panic attack will seize them, many people live in persistent worry that another one could overcome them at any moment. Consequently they start avoiding situations or places they previously panicked.
Paranoia	A condition characterized by the gradual development of an intricate, complex, and elaborate system of thinking based on (and often proceeding logically from) misinterpretation of an actual event.
Passive-aggressive behavior	The individual shows aggressiveness towards other people in an indirect and non-assertive manner.
Patient	Any recipient of health care services. See also: Inpatient, Outpatient and Involuntary Patient.
Peer Support	Informal type of Group Therapy. It may be defined as the help and support that people with lived experience of a mental illness or a learning disability are able to give to one another. It is built on shared personal experience and empathy. See: Group Therapy.
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Personality	Enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself. Personality traits are prominent aspects of personality that are exhibited in a wide range of important social and personal contexts
Personality Disorder	Personality traits constitute a personality disorder when they are inflexible and maladaptive, cause subjective distress and seriously impair an individual's ability to perceive, think and function in social or other settings.
Phobia	An irrational, intense and persistent fear and repulsion towards certain situations, objects, activity or people. In severe cases it can limit people's autonomy. Common phobias involve bugs and insects, crowds, flying or heights.
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	A severe anxiety disorder caused by very stressful, frightening or distressing events (e.g., rapes, life-threatening events, severe injuries, and natural disasters). Someone with PTSD often re-experiences the traumatic event through nightmares and flashbacks, and may experience feelings of isolation, irritability and guilt. They may also have problems sleeping, such as insomnia, and find concentrating difficult.
Problem solving	Thinking that is directed toward solving specific problems and that moves from an initial state to a goal state by means of a set of mental operations.
Projection	A mechanism in which what is emotionally unacceptable in the self is unconsciously rejected and attributed (projected) to others. For example, mother may project their anxiety on their children claiming that they are anxious instead.
Psychiatry	Medical discipline that specialises in treating and curing mental illnesses through both therapy and medication.

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Psychoanalysis	Psychoanalysis focuses on past conflicts as the underpinnings to current emotional and behavioural problems. In this long-term and intensive therapy, an individual meets with a psychoanalyst three to five times a week, using “free association” to explore unconscious motivations and earlier, unproductive patterns of resolving issues
Psychodynamic Therapy	A type of therapy where the understanding of past conflicts is used to promote current change. It attempts to understand the role of the unconscious. Major theorists associated with this type of therapy include Freud and Kohut

PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology	Scientific study of human behavior and the mind. It focuses, for example, on the study of intelligence, memory, perception, emotion and motivation.
Psychosis	Mental health problem that causes people to perceive or interpret things differently from those around them. This might involve hallucinations or delusions.
Psychosomatic disorders	Physical disorders aggravated by or primarily attributable to prolonged emotional stress or other psychological causes.
Psychosomatics	Discipline that studies relationships between mind and body in causing and maintaining illnesses
Psychotherapy	Indicates any treatment of mental disorders that aims at changing thoughts, behaviors or emotions.

PSYCHOSOCIAL

Quality and Outcomes Framework (QOF)

This is part of the GP contract, and encourages Primary Care teams to work towards achieving standards of care in a wide range of conditions including mental health, diabetes, asthma and heart disease. Primary care teams keep computerized records of their performance and they are assessed on an annual basis to see how many points they have achieved. For mental health these targets include screening for depression in high risk groups, using questionnaires to assess depression, monitoring some of the medicines used, performing annual checks for those with a severe mental health problems and monitoring the care of patients with dementia and their carer's needs.

Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)

A comprehensive type of therapy that attempts to use reason and rationality to recognize self-defeating irrational beliefs, and learn to emote more appropriately. A fundamental idea of Rational Emotive Therapy is that cognition influences our interactions, and that those interactions reinforce our underlying beliefs which in turn cause undesirable, highly charged emotional reactions (eg. anxiety).

Recovery

A process by which people who have a mental illness are able to work, learn and participate fully in their communities. For some individuals, recovery is the ability to live a fulfilling and productive life despite a disability. For others, recovery implies the reduction or complete remission of symptoms.

REHABILITATION

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Rehabilitation (rehab)	'Rehab' refers to rehabilitation and in the context of addiction is an intensive structured treatment program; treatment centers may offer inpatient rehab (a live-in center where you spend 24 hours a day under supervision) and/or outpatient rehab (where you make frequent visits to the center, getting treatment you need while going about life 'normally').
Residential treatment centers	Facilities that provide treatment 24 hours a day and can usually serve more than 12 young people at a time. Treatment may include individual, group, and family therapy; behavior therapy; special education; recreation therapy; and medical services. Residential treatment is usually more long-term than inpatient hospitalization. Centers are also known as therapeutic group homes.
Resiliency	Individual ability to face stressful or traumatic events and to re-organize one's life in a positive manner in the face of difficulties
Rumination	Repetitive and negative form of thinking, mostly oriented towards the past.
Schema	Individual cognitive structure that develops precociously. It consists in the fundamental assumptions and beliefs of the individual.

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Schema therapy	Schema Therapy (or more properly, Schema-Focused Cognitive Therapy) is an integrative approach to treatment that combines the best aspects of cognitive-behavioral, experiential, interpersonal and psychoanalytic therapies into one unified model. It has shown remarkable results in helping people to change negative patterns which they have lived with for a long time, even when other methods and efforts they have tried before have been largely unsuccessful.
Schizophrenia	A serious brain disorder. It is a disease that makes it difficult for a person to tell the difference between real and unreal experiences, to think logically, to have normal emotional responses to others, and to behave normally in social situations. It is thus associated with hallucinations and delusions.
Screening	In mental health, a brief formal or informal assessment to identify individuals who have mental health problems or are likely to develop such problems. If a problem is detected, the screening can also determine the most appropriate mental health services for the individual.

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-concept	A person's mental model of his or her own abilities and attributes.
Self-efficacy	The set of beliefs that one can perform adequately in a particular situation

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Self-esteem	A generalized evaluative attitude toward the self, often of one's own worth, that influences both moods and behavior. Self-esteem impacts on personal and social behaviors. Many mental health problems are associated with low self-esteem and low confidence.
Self-fulfilling prophecy	A prediction made about some future behavior or event that modifies interactions so as to produce what is expected.
Self-help	Self-help generally refers to groups or meetings that are operated on an informal, free-of-charge, and non-profit basis and that involve people who have similar needs to offer support and education. It is used to assist people to deal with a life-disrupting event, such as a death, abuse, serious accident, addiction, or diagnosis of a physical, emotional, or mental disability, for oneself or a relative. They are normally facilitated by a consumer, survivor, or other layperson support and education and are voluntary, anonymous, and confidential. Many people with mental illnesses find that self-help groups are an invaluable resource for recovery and for empowerment.
Somatization	Mechanism through which our psychological suffering is transferred and lived in the form of physical symptoms.
Stigma	A mark of shame or discredit. A sign of social unacceptability; in social situations a person or subject may become stigmatised. In mental health stigma is thought to be widespread and often occurs as a result of ignorance, prejudice or fear of mental illnesses.

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Stress	Defined as a feeling of tension that can be both emotional and physical; stress is common in those with and without mental illnesses. Emotional stress usually occurs when situations are considered difficult or unmanageable. Therefore, different people consider different situations as stressful. Physical stress refers to a physiological reaction of the body to various triggers.
Suicide	A successful or unsuccessful attempt to intentionally kill oneself. Suicidal behaviors indicate that a person wishes to, intends to, or actually attempts to commit suicide, often because they feel they are left with no other choice. Suicidal behaviors can accompany many emotional disturbances, including depression, schizophrenia, and other psychotic illnesses.
Symptom	A subjective manifestation of a pathological condition. Symptoms are usually reported by the affected individual rather than observed by the examiner.
Syndrome	A grouping of signs and symptoms, based on their frequent co-occurrence, which may suggest a common underlying pathogenesis, course, familial pattern, or treatment selection
Tic	An involuntary, sudden, rapid, recurrent, non-rhythmic, stereotyped motor movement or vocalization. Example might be eye blinking and throat clearing.
Tourette syndrome	Tourette's syndrome is a neurological condition characterized by a combination of involuntary noises and movements called tics.

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Transsexualism	The physical sexual identity and psychological gender identity don't correspond. Under this condition there is a persistent desire for the physical characteristics and social roles that connote the opposite biological sex. Individuals may decide to undergo a series of medical surgeries in order to make their appearance match with their psychological identity. Also see: Gender dysphoria.
Transvestism	Sexual pleasure derived from dressing or masquerading in the clothing of the opposite sex, with the strong wish to appear as a member of the opposite sex.
Trauma	Consequence of an event or a series of events that are too stressful for an individual to bare and therefore threaten the integrity of one's consciousness.
Worry	Repetitive and negative form of thinking that is future oriented. Worrying thoughts are typical of anxiety disorders.

Please note – we will update this document regularly.