

Prevention of Mental Illness

Mental illness (illness of the Mind): Defined as the disturbances of a person's ability to cope effectively, which results in maladaptive behaviors and impaired functioning.

Prevention of mental illness. This is under three stages; Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.

- 1. Primary Stage of prevention:** At primary stage, the illness has not occurred and therefore you aim at minimizing the occurrences of illness by:
 - a) Improving on the physical state of an individual,
 - b) Improve on the mental health and,
 - c) Focus on the target group.

- 2. Secondary Stage of Prevention:** At this level, the illness has already set in but you aim at controlling full blow of illness by:
 - a) Early recognition and treatment of illness,
 - b) Prompt treatment of illness which must be continuous for some conditions like epilepsy, dementia, schizophrenia,
 - c) Give health education to people, to discover people with psychological problems and teach parents, elders and school teachers to watch out for symptoms of mental illness.

- 3. Tertiary Stage of Prevention:** This is the third level of promotion and prevention where there are some mental illnesses that are likely to reoccur, and therefore this level aims at minimizing recurrences (relapses) by:
 - a) Making sure that patients continue taking medication to minimize signs and symptoms,
 - b) Patients regularly follow up in the Hospital or in their homes,
 - c) Psychiatric patients should avoid the use of alcohol and other substances, e.g. Marijuana,
 - d) Patients should avoid excessive, physical, social and psychological stresses.

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