Psychosocial Impact of Chronic Physical Illness or Injury

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Terminology

- Catastrophe: a sudden, extensive, or notable disaster or misfortune

- Chronic: having long had a disease, habit, weakness, or the like

- Illness: poor health; sickness

- Injury: harm of damage that is done or sustained

From Dictionary.com

Importance of Psychosocial Impact

- Chronic and catastrophic illness has severe, long term effects- simply treating the illness is not sufficient.
- Research shows a strong link between a person's physical, social, and psychological health in many different capacities

Personal and Environmental Impact of Catastrophic and Chronic Illness

- Social Roles
- Financial Status
- Relationships
- Self-Identify
- Mental Health
- Ability

Social Roles

- Many losses and changes in social roles
- Changes often occur in all aspects of life
  - Ex. Home, work, status, etc.

Financial Status

- Loss of income and Increased Costs
  - Employer based short-term/long-term disability
  - Social Security Disability/Supplemental Security Income
  - Temporary Assistance/Unemployment
  - Medical costs and coverage
    - Medicare, COBRA, Marketplace, Commercial Insurance
    - Cost of medical care
  - Community Financial Assistance
    - Rent/mortgage/utility assistance, etc.

Relationships

- All types of relationships are impacted
  - Social, spousal/romantic, parental, professional, etc
- Dynamics change greatly
- Frequency and quality of communication commonly decrease
- Sexual issues often arise

Self-Identity

- Aspects of self with which you took pride and strongly identified have changed or been take away
  - Ex. Hardworking, independent, head of household, one who kept it all together, super mom, physical appearance, athletic, successful, etc.

Ability

- Often results in decreased cognitive and physical abilities
  - memory, language, executive functioning, driving, use of assistive device, dizziness, pain, decreased use of certain parts/areas of the body, etc.

Mental Health

- Many illnesses and injuries (especially neurological) can cause physiological changes that cause changes in mood
- Mood changes can also be a secondary effect of all of the other changes and losses that have occurred as a result of the illness or injury
- Mental Illness often difficult to diagnose when co-occurring with many chronic/catastrophic illness

Psychosocial Impact

- Psychological and social effects result from the personal and environmental change and loss of illness or injury
  - Fear, guilt, sadness, anger, resentment, blame, grief, "why me," isolation, impaired relationships, confusion, apathetic, loss of interest, hopelessness, thoughts of suicide, etc.
- Overall feeling of being overwhelmed and "frozen"

Interventions

- Assessment
- Treatment Planning
- Implementation

Assessment

- Pertinent Information
  - Client view of problems
  - Cultural perspective
  - Health perspective
  - Support system
  - Dynamic of key players
  - Resources available
  - Living situation

Assessment

- Information gathering
  - LISTEN.
    - Most often, the client will be open and knowledgeable about what they need, but not always.
    - Do not judge or make assumptions.
    - Provide a safe, encouraging environment for them to speak fully. May just need to express things they haven't been able to.
  - Pull the threads.
    - Pay attention to reoccurring themes and ask more about them.
  - Use open-ended questions.
    - Create opportunities for them to tell their story.

Treatment Planning

- Creating the plan
  - Our goal is to help the client.
  - Respect and be empathetic toward the client's choices and situation.
  - We must allow the client to determine their own priorities.
  - Take into account what the client can accomplish in the time they are in your care and create a backup plan for when they no longer are.
  - Confirm the plan with the client.
  - The best answer for them may not always be in line with your values.

Implementation

- Resources
  - You don't need to know all the answers- just know who does.
  - Be honest with the client about what's available.
  - Research resources often.
  - Place as much responsibility on the client as is feasible.
  - Keep an open mind to alternative treatments.

Implementation

- Counseling
  - Supportive- be a listening ear. Short terms goal is to give them an opportunity to express themselves. Long term goal will be to help the client find other support systems.
  - Adjustment- use therapeutic approaches to help the client manage the changes that have occurred in their life.
    - Ex. Identifying immediate needs , new coping mechanisms, communication strategies to improve relationships, foster empowerment, acceptance, redefining self, re-engaging in life/community, etc.

Implementation

- Therapeutic Approaches
  - Crisis Intervention
  - Cognitive Behavioral Approach
  - Dialectical Behavioral Approach
  - Mindfullness
  - Motivational Interviewing

Therapeutic Approaches

- Crisis intervention
  - Identify problem that is overwhelming the client and assess the extent of threat
  - Assist the client in prioritizing their concerns
  - Encourage the person to discuss the event
    - the meaning and cognitive, behavioral, and affective components
    - the opportunity within the crisis situation.
  - Help the person solve the problem and find effective coping mechanisms. Prepare them to deal with ongoing problems.

Therapeutic Approaches

- Cognitive Behavioral Approach
  - Identify problematic ways in how a person views a situation and the feelings attached to it
  - Present alternative ways on viewing it.
  - Identify ways in which the client could change their behavioral response in congruence with the alternate perspective.
  - Have the client observe how the overall situation and feelings attached to it change- continued motivation for change.

Therapeutic Approaches

- Dialectical Behavioral Approach
  - Recognizing and accepting ambivalence and opposing truths
  - Balance of reasonable mind and emotional mind
  - Help the client move from an "or" to an "and" mindset

Therapeutic Approaches

- Mindfullness
  - Learn to intentionally observe and describe in a non-judgmental manner.
  - Can be practiced formally (meditation) or informally (in daily tasks)
  - Practice can help clients with
    - stress reduction
    - learning to live in the present
    - Practicing the process of observing, accepting, and letting go

Therapeutic Approaches

- Motivational Interviewing
  - Style of Communication
  - MI Spirit- Collaboration, Acceptance, Compassion, Evocation.
  - Change talk
    - Listen for and identify preparatory change talk and mobilizing language
    - Identify conflicting statements

Questions???

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