Isaac Feldman Group: Mental Health

D-Term Paper

There are many different mental disorders but one of the most prominent is one called Generalized Anxiety Disorder or GAD, for short. There are about 6.8 million Americans with this disorder and it affects them greatly. The symptoms of this disorder include any form of excessive worry for more than a period of 6 months. People affected by GAD have many other symptoms such as startling easily, having difficulty concentrating, and not being able to relax. People with GAD usually are pessimistic as a result of their disorder. There are many physical symptoms to GAD as well such as the following: fatigue, headaches, muscle tension, muscle aches, difficulty swallowing, trembling, twitching, irritability, sweating, nausea, lightheadedness, the need to go to the restroom frequently, shortness of breath, and hot flashes. Some other disorders, such as depression, usually accompany GAD. GAD can be treated with cognitive-behavioral therapy and medication. GAD is a problem in modern society because it prevents those with it from accomplishing goals. This not only hurts society, but also hurts economy. People with GAD cannot carry-out daily tasks such as sustaining a job and taking care of a family. In this way, the world economy loses many people that could otherwise be working to depression and anxiety. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/generalized-anxiety-disorder-gad.shtml>)

There are many organizations that fight GAD, one of which is the Capital Area Mental Health Center in Austin, TX. This organization uses both medication and cognitive-behavioral therapy to treat patients in a fair way. Capital Area Mental Health Center was founded in 1980 and has been treating patients for 30 years in depression, anxiety, marital or relationship issues, sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, family violence, bipolar disorder, borderline personality, social isolation, and many other issues. Capital Area Mental Health Center provides services with no session limits. This means that they provide serviced based on the clinical needs of a client. (<http://www.camhc.org/>)

 Another mental health issue is Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder or OCD, for short. There are about 2.2 million Americans that have this disorder. The symptoms of this disorder include upsetting thoughts or obsessions that seem to only be able to be controlled by rituals or compulsions. These rituals only relieve people with OCD temporarily and are not the correct solution for their anxiety. People with OCD commonly have compulsions related to symmetry and hoarding items, because they have difficulty throwing them out. These rituals or compulsions interfere with daily life. For example, if someone were to constantly have the obsession that a bird were to fly through their window and turn on their shower (as ridiculous as that may seem it is still a viable obsession) they would constantly be making sure that their window is closed and their shower is off. This obsession would prevent them from carrying out daily tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and working in general. OCD comes and goes over time. Usually people with OCD will avoid situations that require their obsessions. This can be a problem, because what if that situation were at work? They would not be able to support a family and could also damage the overall economy in their country if there were enough people with the disorder. OCD can be treated by medications and exposure-based psychotherapy. This therapy exposes the obsession to a person until they have overcome it. For example, if someone was afraid of becoming wet while wearing their clothes, exposure therapy would pour water on them. They would have an extreme bout with anxiety before overcoming their obsession. Medication also helps because it literally tricks the human mind into creating more serotonin, the calming chemical in the brain. This reduces anxiety and makes resisting compulsions easier, allowing people to cope with OCD. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/obsessive-compulsive-disorder.shtml>)

An organization in Austin, TX that provides exposure based therapy for OCD is the Austin Behavioral Health Center. Austin Behavioral Health Center has been helping people in assessment, ADD/ADHD, bipolar, Asperger’s and ADHD, learning differences/disabilities, Dyslexia, Dysgraphia and Dyscalculia, consultation, play therapy, and psychotherapy for over 15 years. The men and women at this organization have over 40 years of experience between them. (<http://www.austinbehavioral.info/>)

 Another major mentally related disorder that affects the world is Panic Disorder. There are about 6 million Americans that have this disorder and it is twice as common in women as men. Symptoms of this disease are sudden attacks of terror that have physical effects such as a pounding heart, sweating freely, weakness, faintness, and dizziness. People that have panic attacks may feel flushed or have chills, can have tingling hands, may have nausea, chest pain, or smothering sensations. Fearing one’s own unexplained physical symptoms can also be a symptom of panic disorder. People with Panic Disorder can also develop fears of places that they have had a panic attack. For example, if someone were to have a panic attack in their kitchen, they may develop a fear of kitchens in general. About one third of people that have Panic Disorder become housebound or will only go to places with someone that they trust deeply, such as a spouse. Panic Disorder can be accompanied by many different other disorders such as depression, alcoholism, and drug abuse. Panic Disorder can be effectively treated with medication and cognitive psychotherapy and is fortunately considered to be one of the most treatable mental disorders. Panic Disorder, as all other mental disorders do, affects not only the economy in negative ways but also affects family life. People with Panic Disorder cannot support a family and are not able to keep a job for a long time. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/panic-disorder.shtml>)

There are many places in Austin, TX that treat Panic Disorder, one of which is The Austin State Hospital. This organization uses cognitive therapy for all kinds of mental disorders, including Panic Disorder. Austin State Hospital has been working in the field of psychotherapy for over 150 years and treats people with psychiatry, nursing, social work, psychology, education/rehabilitation, nutrition, and spiritual care. (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/mhhospitals/austinsh/default.shtm>)

 Next in the line-up is a well-known mental disorder that is commonly found in people that have come back from a war in a foreign country, this disorder is called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD, for short. PTSD affects an astounding 7.7 million Americans, and the number continues to grow. (http://cannontherapy.com/ptsd/causes.html) As is popularly known, PTSD occurs in the human mind when someone has seen or lived through a dangerous event. People with PTSD have a broken sense of fear. This means that when they have gone through a dangerous event, they are afraid. But there is more to it than that: their initial fear never seems to wear off. People that have PTSD can feel stressed and frightened even when they are no longer in danger. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/post-traumatic-stress-disorder-ptsd/what-is-post-traumatic-stress-disorder-or-ptsd.shtml>) PTSD is effectively treated by either exposure based therapy, cognitive therapy, or medication. A form of medication used for PTSD is called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor. This drug is also effective in the treatment of depression. PTSD can be a major issue, as other mental disorders are, because people with the disorder cannot support a family and very often end up homeless. There are many United States Government efforts to fix the problem of PTSD in America. (<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/treatment-ptsd.asp>)

 Social Phobia is also an issue in modern society. Social Phobia is also known by the name of Social Anxiety Disorder. This disorder affects about 15 million Americans. It is diagnosed when someone is excessively anxious and self-conscious in everyday social situations, such as taking a walk in a park, or eating dinner with a friend. Social Phobia makes people believe that they are constantly being judged by others and are in constant fear that they will do something that will embarrass them. Social Phobia can be either broad or limited. This means that someone can fear being in an elevator with another person or they can fear a multitude of things. People with Social Phobia also have physical symptoms such as sweating, nausea, difficulty talking, and blushing often. Social Phobia is able to be treated by differing kinds of psychotherapy and medications. As many other disorders propose, the problem with Social Phobia is that it prevents people from functioning in society. For example, what if you were supposed to go to work but had the fear that you would be embarrassed publicly? Eventually you would lose your job and would become homeless. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/anxiety-disorders/social-phobia-social-anxiety-disorder.shtml>)

 An organization that treats Social Phobia with both psychotherapy and medication is the Austin Travis County Integral Care Organization. This organization also provides the services of psychiatric evaluations, medication treatment, inpatient treatment, vocational services, service coordination, family support and respite care, housing, information and referral, and supported living and residential services. Organizations like Austin Travis County Integral Care not only help people with psychiatric problems, but also with financial issues that happen as a result of the disorder. (<http://www.integralcare.org/?nd=about>)

 One of the most common mental disorders in the United States is very well known: depression. Many mental disorders are commonly accompanied by this disease, but it can be effectively treated. About 57.7 million people in the United States have been diagnosed with one or more mental disorders in a given year, and the number is growing. Many of the mental disorders are accompanied by depression, making it the leading disorder in the country. Depression can be signified by the following: persistent sad or anxious feelings, feelings of hopelessness and pessimism, feelings of “free floating guilt,” irritability, loss of interest of hobbies that were once pleasurable, fatigue and decreased energy, difficulty concentrating, overeating, insomnia, thoughts of suicide, and persistent aches or pains. Medications, such as antidepressants, help to fix the problem of depression by normalizing chemicals in the brain. This treatment strikes at the scientific, physical core of depression and is very effective in wiping it out. Psychotherapy is another treatment that helps depression by finding out what may be the cause, other than chemical imbalance. This can mean that someone is having a social issue that needs to be resolved in order to stop depression. The burden on the United States economy caused by these mental disorders is more than the burden caused by all forms of cancer combined. Mental disorders are a real threat to our society because of the amount of money necessary to keep people out of disorders. This applies heavily to depression because it is one of the leading disorders in the United States. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression/index.shtml>)

 There are tons of places that treat mental disorders from far and wide, but almost all of them treat depression. One that stands out in Austin, TX is Seton Shoal Creek Hospital. Seton has been helping people with emotional crises, depression, and drug and alcohol dependence for over 30 years. Seton also provides psychiatric stabilization 24 hours per day. (<http://www.seton.net/medical_services_and_programs/mental_health_services/>)

 There are many disorders that affect the brain and behavior, such as depression, but did you know that eating disorders are also mentally based? That’s right. Eating disorders affect people physically more than any other mental disease. Anorexia Nervosa is one of these and is extremely dangerous. It is characterized by an unyielding attempt of thinness and unwillingness to keep and normal, healthy weight. People with Anorexia (as it is more commonly known) fear gaining weight and have a disturbed eating behavior. Anorexia causes people to misuse the following: dieting and exercising excessively, losing weight by self-induced vomiting, and misuse of laxatives. People with Anorexia think that they are overweight constantly. People with Anorexia are up to ten times more likely to die as a result of their illness. Anorexia is commonly accompanied by other mental illnesses such as OCD, depression, and anxiety. Treatment for Anorexia involves three steps. 1) Returning a person to a healthy weight. 2) Treating the psychological disorders that caused it. 3) Eliminating behaviors that dictate eating. Anorexia is a problem because it constantly takes peoples’ minds off of the task at hand and makes them think about their weight. These people are preoccupied constantly and this causes them to have worse quality of work than the norm. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/eating-disorders/anorexia-nervosa.shtml>)

 An organization that treats eating disorders is Cedar Springs, in Austin, TX. Cedar Springs is the first of its kind. It treats people with the disorders of Anorexia, Bulimia, and other eating disorders. Cedar Springs also helps people by using psychiatric care, psychotherapy, and nutritional and fitness counseling. (<http://www.cedarspringsaustin.com/index.html>)

 Another well known eating disorder is called Bulimia Nervosa. This eating disorder is characterized by many different symptoms. Foremost among these is frequently eating very large amounts of food and not being able to stop. A person with Bulimia will then compensate for this eating by expelling the food in some way, this can include vomiting or use of laxatives, as well as fasting. People with Bulimia can be within the normal weight range, unlike Anorexia. There are similarities between the two though. This includes fear of gaining weight, wanting to lose weight to a fault, and being unhappy with their body size and weight. People with Bulimia do Bulimic actions secretly, because they are afraid or ashamed of their behavior. Bulimia can be successfully treated by going through psychotherapy and nutritional counseling. People with Bulimia can also be treated with medication such as Prozac. This medication treats Bulimia and also helps those with it to lose anxiety or depression. Prozac has also been proven to improve eating behavior. Bulimia, as Anorexia is, is a problem because it makes people preoccupied and keeps them from accomplishing at the norm that has been set by society. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/eating-disorders/bulimia-nervosa.shtml>)

 One of the scarier of the mental disorders known is Schizophrenia. Schizophrenia is a well known disorder that can be characterized my many attributes. These may include hallucinations. Hallucinations are when someone sees, hears, smells or feels something that others do not. The most common one of these is voices. People with Schizophrenia hear these voices and respond to them. Schizophrenia also has a symptom of delusions. Delusions are false beliefs that someone has that are not part of what they actually know and believe. These delusions are often not logical and people with Schizophrenia will continue to believe them when someone has proved them wrong. For example: someone with Schizophrenia could believe that they have a 2 foot tall dwarf chasing them with a machete, and would still believe it even though someone told them logically that it was not true. Yet another symptom is thought disorder. This means that someone will think in a garbled way and sometimes become hard to understand. People with this symptom will sometimes use meaningless words or will stop mid-sentence because they forgot what they were going to say. Schizophrenia also causes people to not have enjoyment in everyday life and will cause them to not interact much. The last symptoms of Schizophrenia can be not being able to make decisions with information that you have been given, not being able to pay attention, and not being able to apply memories. Schizophrenia, thankfully, can be treated. Treatments for the disease include antipsychotic medication, psychosocial treatments, and illness management skills. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/schizophrenia/index.shtml>)

 Treatment centers for Schizophrenia range far and wide, but one locally in Austin is NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Austin. Since 1984, NAMI Austin has been treating a variety of mental illnesses, including Schizophrenia. NAMI Austin is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to rehabilitating those with mental illnesses. (<http://www.nami.org/MSTemplate.cfm?Section=About_Us4&Site=NAMI_Austin&Template=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=99839>)

 A disorder that commonly affects children is called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, or ADHD, for short. ADHD has symptoms that are very closely related and are easy to spot. First of these is trouble paying attention. Many people can become preoccupied, but ADHD causes someone to make people have trouble controlling their physical behavior as well. Related to this is hyperactivity, or over activity. This and other symptoms are a problem in society because it can cause people to not learn information that would otherwise be valuable in society. This condition is treatable, but there is no cure for it. ADHD can be treated with various medications, types of psychotherapy, education or training, and a combination of these treatments. People who are treated and have ADHD have fairly normal lives and learn normally. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/attention-deficit-hyperactivity-disorder-adhd/index.shtml>)

 A local, Austin organization that treats ADHD effectively is the Austin Psychology and Assessment Center, or ApaCenter. ApaCenter was founded in 2007 by Dr. Mike Brooks and has since then been providing psychological services for children, teenagers, and adults. ApaCenter provides life coaching, psychological assessments, therapy, and educational support. ApaCenter specializes in the following: ADD/ADHD, Dyslexia and other learning disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Emotional Well-Being, and parenting. (<http://www.apacenter.com/about/>)

 Last but surely not least is a disorder that many people often misunderstand: Bipolar Disorder. Bipolar Disorder is characterized by extreme emotional periods. These episodes can be overly joyful, or manic. They can also be extremely hopeless, or depressive. People with Bipolar disorder can also have intense changes in sleep, activity, and energy. These physical aspects go along with the extreme mood that a person is in. Symptoms of bipolar disorder are a problem in our society because they can affect someone at work, home, or school. A person with Bipolar disorder may feel so happy that they cannot sit still and work, or may feel so depressed that they cannot function in society. This not only increases the amount of people that lose jobs or cannot hold a family together, but also increases suicide rates. As with other mental illnesses, Bipolar Disorder is real and can be treated. Various forms of medication help to stabilize moods of people with Bipolar disorder. The illness can also be treated by various forms of psychotherapy, including cognitive behavioral therapy and psychoeducation, which help people to learn about their problem and also to change and prevent harmful thought patterns. (<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/bipolar-disorder/index.shtml>)

 Fortunately, there are treatment centers for Bipolar disorder in Austin, one of which is the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance. This organization has been operating since 1985 with the intent of finding a definite cure for mental disorders. DBSA also supports getting more timely diagnoses and is a non-profit organization. Organizations like the DBSA contribute to the ultimate goal of eradicating these diseases once and for all. (<http://www.dbsalliance.org/site/PageServer?pagename=dbsa_aboutdbsa>)