

Mental health treatment

According to CDC, in 2019, 19.2% of US adults received mental health treatment:
15.8% taken prescription medication for their mental health
9.5% received counseling or therapy from a mental health professional

Treatment in the past

Treatments aimed at supernatural forces:

- Exorcism — involving incantations and prayers said over the individual's body by a priest / religious figure
- Trephining — a hole was made in the skull to release spirits from the body (often leading to death)
- Execution or imprisonment — many mentally ill people were burnt at the stake after being accused of witchcraft
- By the 18th century, people exhibiting unusual behavior began to be institutionalized
- Asylums — the first institutions created for the specific purpose of housing people with psychological disorders
- Philippe Pinel (late 1700s) argued for more human treatment of the mentally ill
- Patients benefited and many were able to be released from the hospital

Treatment in the past

Dorothea Dix (19th century)

- Instrumental in creating the first American mental asylum — by relentlessly lobbying state legislatures and congress to set up and fund such institutions

American asylums

- Filthy
- Offered little treatment
- Individuals were often institutionalized for decades

Treatment:

- Submersion into cold baths for long periods of time
- Electroshock treatment (now called electroconvulsive therapy)
- Conditions such as these were common until well into the 20th century

Treatment in the past

1954 — antipsychotic medications were introduced

1975 — mental retardation facilities & community mental health centers construction act

- Provided federal support and funding of community mental health centers
- Started the process of deinstitutionalization

Deinstitutionalization — the closing of large asylums, by providing for people to stay in their communities and be treated locally

- Centers were underfunded and staff was untrained to handle severe mental illnesses
- Lead to an increase in homelessness

Mental health treatment today

- Involuntary treatment — therapy that is not the individual's choice

- Voluntary treatment — the person chooses to attend therapy to obtain relief from symptoms
- Sources of psychological treatment — community mental health centers, private or community practitioners, school counselors, school psychologists or school social workers, group therapy
- Treatment providers include psychologists, psychiatrists, clinical social workers, marriage and family therapists

Psychotherapy

- Any psychosocial or behavioral intervention designed to alleviate distress, reduce maladaptive behavior, or increase adaptive behavior through playful application of psychological principles and techniques
- Several different theoretical orientations
- Different modalities and formats: individual, group, family, couples, etc.

Psychoanalysis

- First form of psychotherapy, developed by Sigmund Freud in the early 20th century
- Aimed to help uncover repressed feelings

Techniques:

- Free association — patient relaxes and then says whatever comes to mind at the moment
- Dream analysis — therapist interprets the underlying meaning of dreams
- Transference — patient transfers all the positive or negative emotion associated with their other relationship to the psychoanalyst

Psychoanalysis today:

Psychodynamic psychotherapy — talk therapy is based on the belief that the unconscious and childhood conflicts impact behavior

Behavior therapy

Principles of learning are applied to change undesirable behaviors

Classical conditioning — conditioning principles are applied to recondition clients and change their behavior

Counterconditioning — client learns a new response to a stimulus that has previously elicited an undesirable behavior. Includes aversive conditioning and exposure therapy

Aversive conditioning — uses an unpleasant stimulus to stop an undesirable behavior

- Client is repeatedly exposed to something unpleasant, such as a mild electric shock or bad taste while they engage in a specific behavior —> client learns to associate the unpleasant stimulus and unwanted behavior

Exposure therapy — seek to change the response to a conditioned stimulus

- Client is repeatedly exposed to the object / situation that causes their problem, with the idea that they will eventually get used to it

Operant conditioning

Applied behavior analysis — operant conditioning technique designed to reinforce positive behaviors and punish unwanted behaviors

- Effective in helping children with autism

- Child-specific reinforcers (e.g. stickers, praise, candy) are used to reward and motivate autistic children when they demonstrate desired behaviors
- Punishment (e.g. timeout) might be used to discourage undesirable behaviors

Token economy:

- Used in controlled settings such as psychiatric hospitals
- Individuals are reinforced for desired behaviors with tokens (e.g. a poker chip), that can be exchanged for item or privileges

Cognitive therapy

- Developed by Aaron Beck in the 1960s
- Focuses on how thoughts lead to feelings of distress
- Cognitive therapists help clients become aware of their cognitive distortions (thinking errors)

Overgeneralizing — taking a small situation and making it huge

Polarized (“black and white”) thinking — seeing things in absolutes, “I am either perfect or a failure”

Jumping to conclusions — assuming that people are thinking negatively about you or reacting negatively to you, without evidence

- Clients are helped to change dysfunctional thinking patterns by challenging irrational beliefs, focusing on their illogical basis, and correcting them with more logical rational thoughts / beliefs

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) — works to change cognitive distortions and self-defeating behaviors (aims to change both how people think and how they act)

- Helps clients examine how their thoughts affect their behavior
- Combination of cognitive therapy (making individuals aware of irrational, negative thoughts, and replacing them with positive ways of thinking) and behavior therapies (teaching people to practice and engage in more positive, healthy approaches to situations)
- Used the ABC model to reveal cognitive distortions

Action — activating event

Belief about the event

Consequence about the belief

CBT sessions: assessment, session agenda, in-session practice, out-of-session practice, review/reinforcement

Humanistic therapy

- Focuses on helping people achieve their potential
- Goal is to increase self-awareness and acceptance through a focus on conscious thoughts

Rogerian / client-centered therapy

- Emphasized the importance of the person taking control of their own life to overcome life's challenges
- Non-directive therapy

Techniques:

- Active listening — therapist acknowledges, restates, and clarifies what the client expresses
- Unconditional positive regard — therapist does not judge clients and simply accepts them for who they are
- Genuineness, empathy, and acceptance toward clients

Biomedical therapies

Psychotropic medication — medications used to treat psychological disorders

- Treat the symptoms of psychological disorders but do not cure the disorder

Antipsychotics — treat positive psychotic symptoms such as hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia by blocking dopamine

Atypical antipsychotics — treat the negative symptoms of schizophrenia such as withdrawal and apathy, by targeting both dopamine and serotonin receptors

Anti-depressants — depress central nervous system activation

Mood stabilizers — treat episodes of mania as well as depression

Stimulants — improve the ability to focus on a task and maintain attention

Electroconvulsive therapy — includes seizures to help alleviate severe depression

Transcranial magnetic stimulation — magnetic fields stimulate nerve cells to improve depression symptom

Treatment modalities

Individual therapy

- In an individual therapy session, a client works one-on-one with a trained therapist

Group therapy

- In group therapy, several clients meet with a trained therapist to discuss a common issues such as divorce, grief, an eating disorder, substance abuse, or anger management
- Psycho-educational groups — groups with a strong educational component (e.g, a group for children whose parents have cancer that teaches them about cancer)

Family therapy

Aims to enhance the growth of each family member as well as that of the family as a whole

Systems approach — family is viewed as an organized system, and each individual is a contributing member who creates and maintain within the system that shape behavior

Structural family therapy — examines and discusses the boundaries and strict of the family

Strategic family therapy — aims to address specific problems within the family that can be felt with in a short amount of time

Couples therapy

Therapist held people work on difficulties in their relationship, aim to help them resolve problems and implement strategies that will lead to a healthier and happier relationship

Treatment barriers

Access and availability of mental health services:

- Lack of insurance
- Transportation

- Time

Ethical disparities:

- Lack of bilingual treatment
- Stigma
- Fear of not being understood
- Family privacy
- Lack of education on mental illness

Perceptions and attitudes:

- Self-sufficiency and not seeing the need for help
- Not seeing therapy as effective
- Concerns about confidentiality
- Fear of psychiatric hospitalization or treatment itself