

Mental Illness



Disclaimer

- Please do not start diagnosing yourself, friends, family, or school mates. This section will provide common traits of certain Mental Illnesses, it will not enable you to make a diagnosis. Especially since while some symptoms may be present, it does not mean an illness is present.
- Also remember that people are NOT defined by their illnesses, rather they are people with an illness



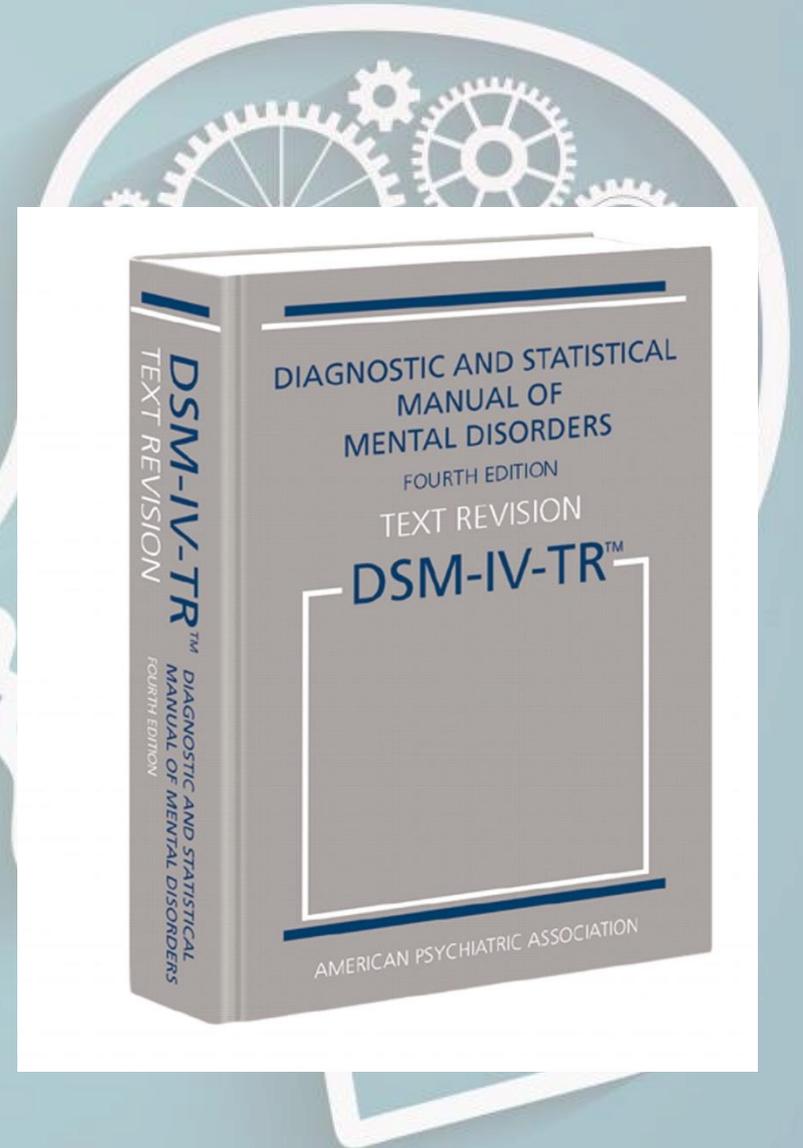
Psychological Definition of a Mental Disorder

- A clinically significant behavioral or psychological syndrome or pattern that occurs in an individual and that is associated with present distress (a painful symptom) or disability (impairment in one or more areas of functioning) or with a significantly increased risk of suffering death, pain, disability, or an important loss of freedom.



The DSM IV

- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)
 - Introduced in 1952
 - Moving from a subjective to operational definition
 - Diagnosis is based on signs and symptoms
 - Signs- objective observations of a patients physical or mental disorder by a diagnostician
 - Symptoms- patient's subjective description of a physical or mental disorder



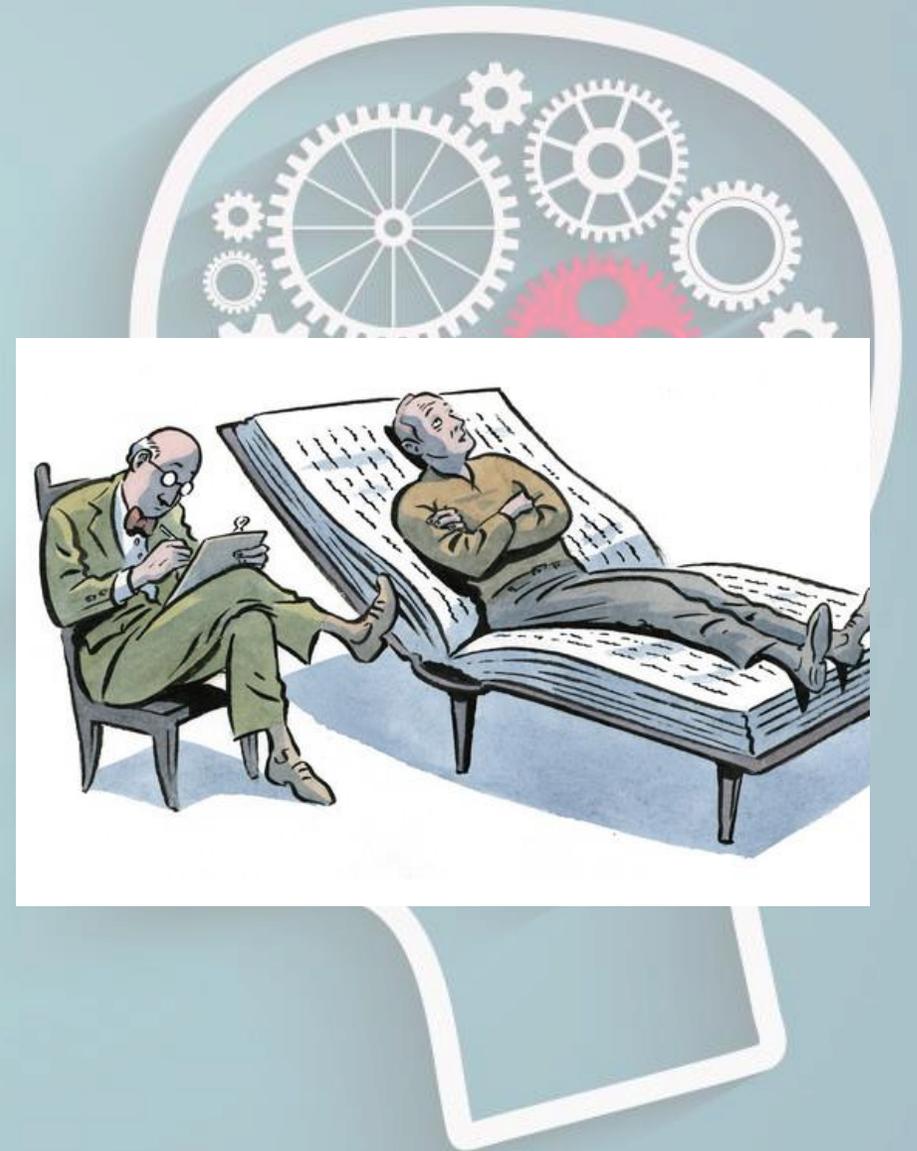
DSM Groupings

- The DSM classifies disorders using different tiers of categories based on similar characteristics
 - Disorders secondary to gross destruction or malfunctioning of brain tissue
 - Substance-use disorders
 - Disorders of psychological or sociological origin having no known brain pathology
 - Disorders usually arising during childhood or adolescence



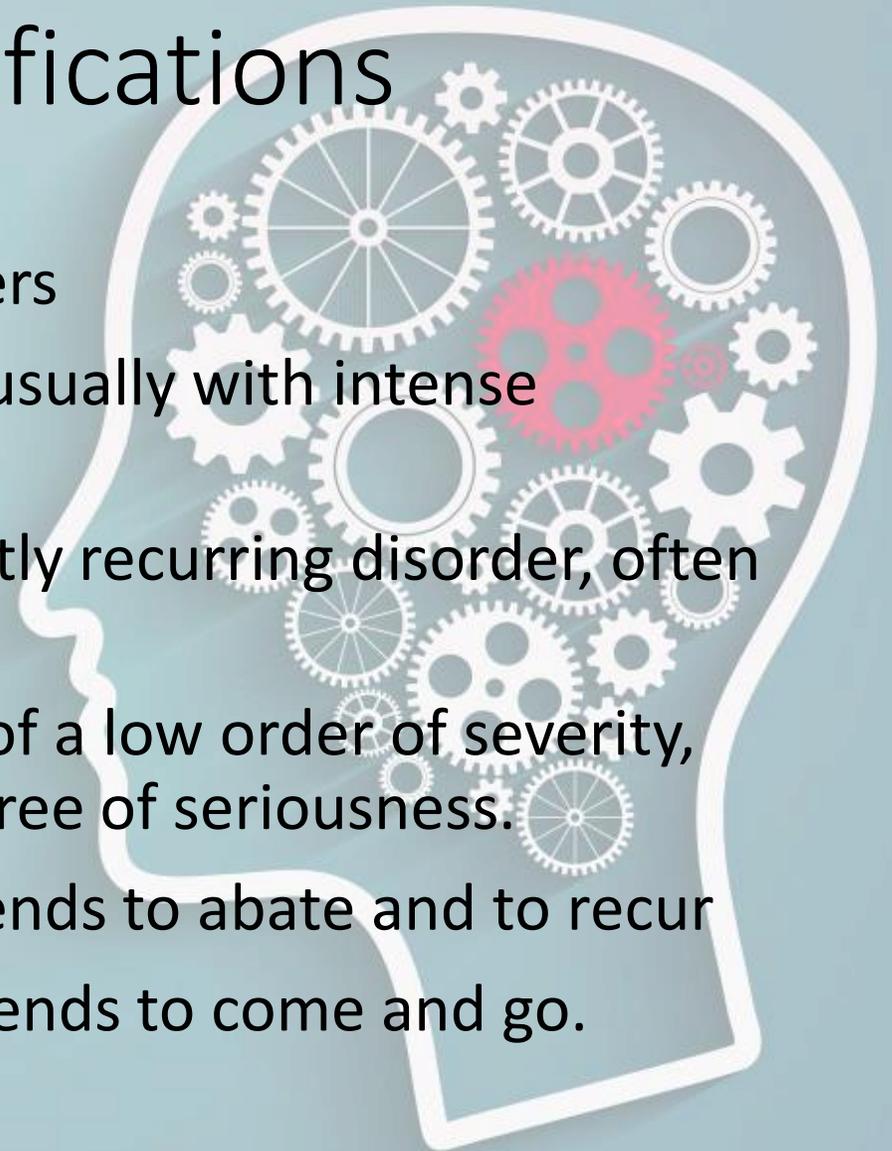
Goals of the DSM

- To provide a system for diagnosing disorders
 - Disorders diagnosed by psychologists and medical professionals
- To improve the reliability of diagnoses
- To make diagnoses consistent with research evidence and clinical experiences.



Mental Illness Severity Classifications

- Comorbidity-Existence of two or more disorders
- Acute- Describes a disorder of sudden onset, usually with intense symptoms
- Chronic- Describes a long-standing or frequently recurring disorder, often of progressing seriousness
- Mild/Moderate/Severe- Describes a disorder of a low order of severity, intermediate order of severity, and a high degree of seriousness.
- Episodic Disorder- Describes a disorder that tends to abate and to recur
- Recurrent- Describes a disorder pattern that tends to come and go.



Common Psychological Disorders: Anxiety

- Anxiety is a generalized feeling of fear and apprehension that may be related to a situation or object.
- Anxiety is often accompanied by increased physiological arousal
 - increase heart rate, blood pressure, and respiration

THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST FRUSTRATING THINGS ABOUT HAVING AN ANXIETY DISORDER; KNOWING AS YOU'RE FREAKING OUT THAT THERE'S NO REASON TO BE FREAKED OUT, BUT LACKING THE ABILITY TO SHUT THE EMOTION DOWN.



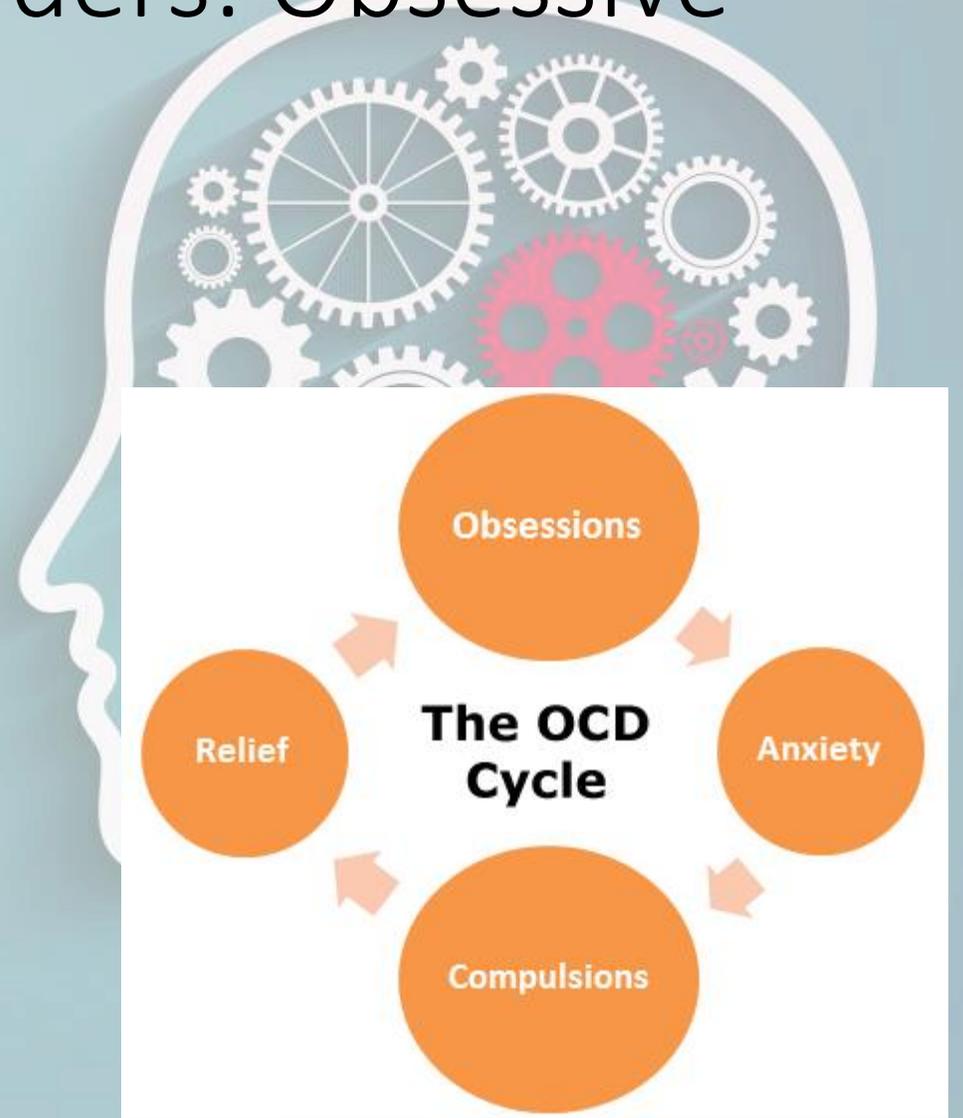
Common Psychological Disorders: ADD and ADHD

- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is characterized by the inability to focus on a task, focus, organize, or follow through on a task.
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) is similar to ADHD, except without the hyperactivity. People with ADHD have trouble focusing due to over-activity, ADD can be a case of under-activity



Common Psychological Disorders: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

- OCD involves persistent, uncontrollable, thoughts and irrational beliefs
- The obsessions are intrusive thoughts cause compulsive rituals that interfere with daily life
 - The ritual behaviors are compulsions that are performed by the person to reduce anxiety.
 - These compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts a person feels they **MUST** perform



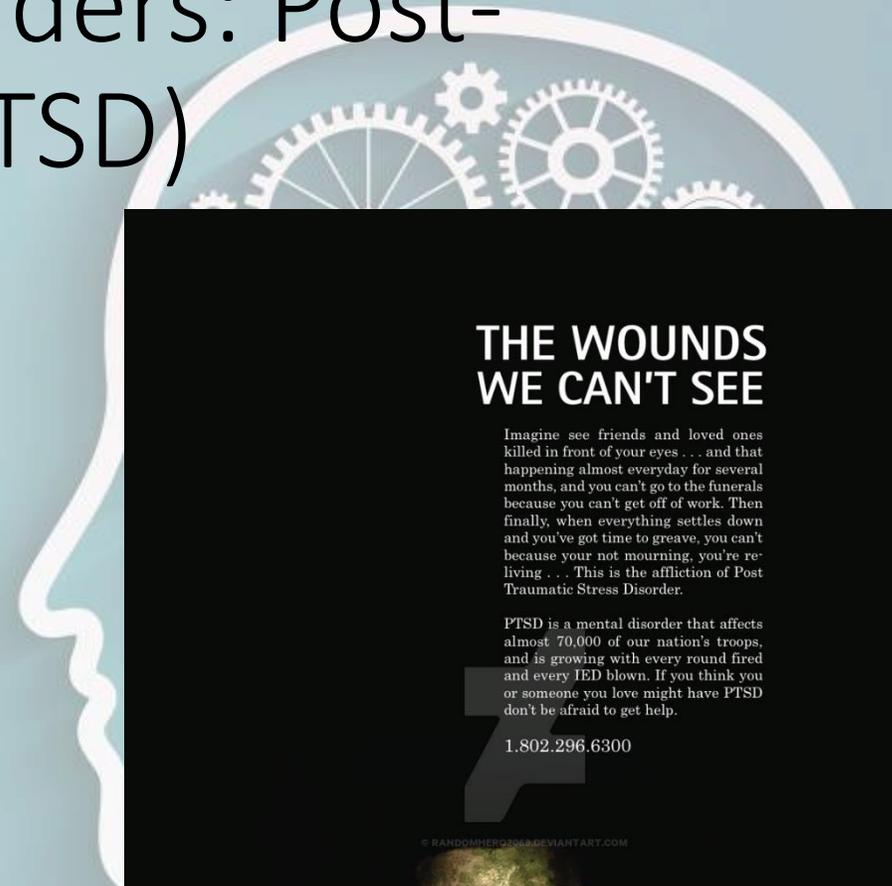
Common Psychological Disorders: Phobias

- *Phobic disorders* are excessive, sometimes irrational fear and avoidance of specific objects or situations
 - Can be a fear of inanimate objects
 - Fear of situations that may be embarrassing or harmful
- Usually a learned behavior
 - Learned through conditioning



Common Psychological Disorders: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

- A disorder that develops in some people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event
- Soldiers in continuously dangerous, dangerous, or fearful situations, or who have lived through traumatic experiences are likely to develop symptoms
 - Also high among first responders, or anyone who has witnessed a traumatic event
- Responses in brain usually triggered by auditory or visual queues



THE WOUNDS WE CAN'T SEE

Imagine see friends and loved ones killed in front of your eyes . . . and that happening almost everyday for several months, and you can't go to the funerals because you can't get off of work. Then finally, when everything settles down and you've got time to grieve, you can't because your not mourning, you're re-living . . . This is the affliction of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

PTSD is a mental disorder that affects almost 70,000 of our nation's troops, and is growing with every round fired and every IED blown. If you think you or someone you love might have PTSD don't be afraid to get help.

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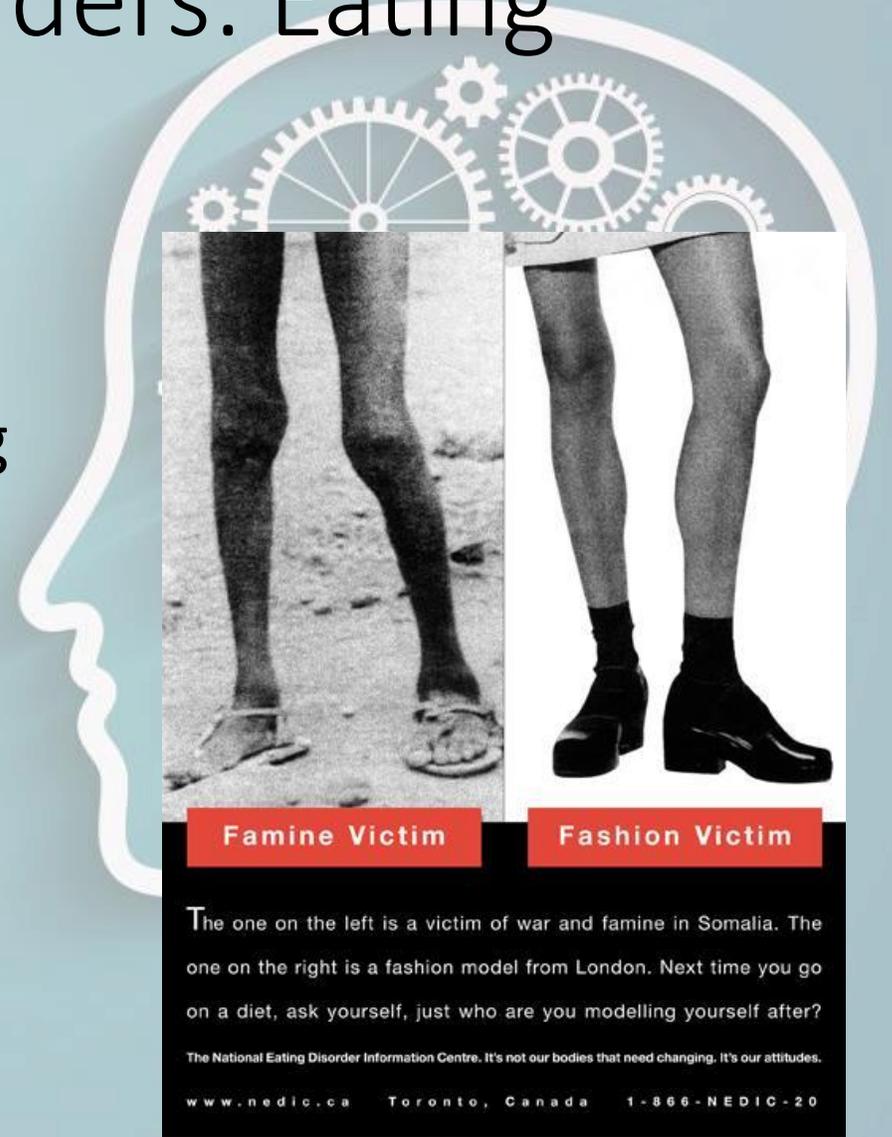
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National Center for PTSD
Department of Veterans Affairs

Common Psychological Disorders: Eating Disorders

- Societal and individual pressure to reach perceived standards of beauty can lead to individuals drastically changing their eating habits
 - Anorexia Nervosa – Disorder where an individual intentionally starves themselves
 - Bulimia Nervosa – Individuals consume large amounts of food and then rid their bodies of the excess calories by vomiting, abusing laxatives or diuretics, taking enemas, or exercising obsessively



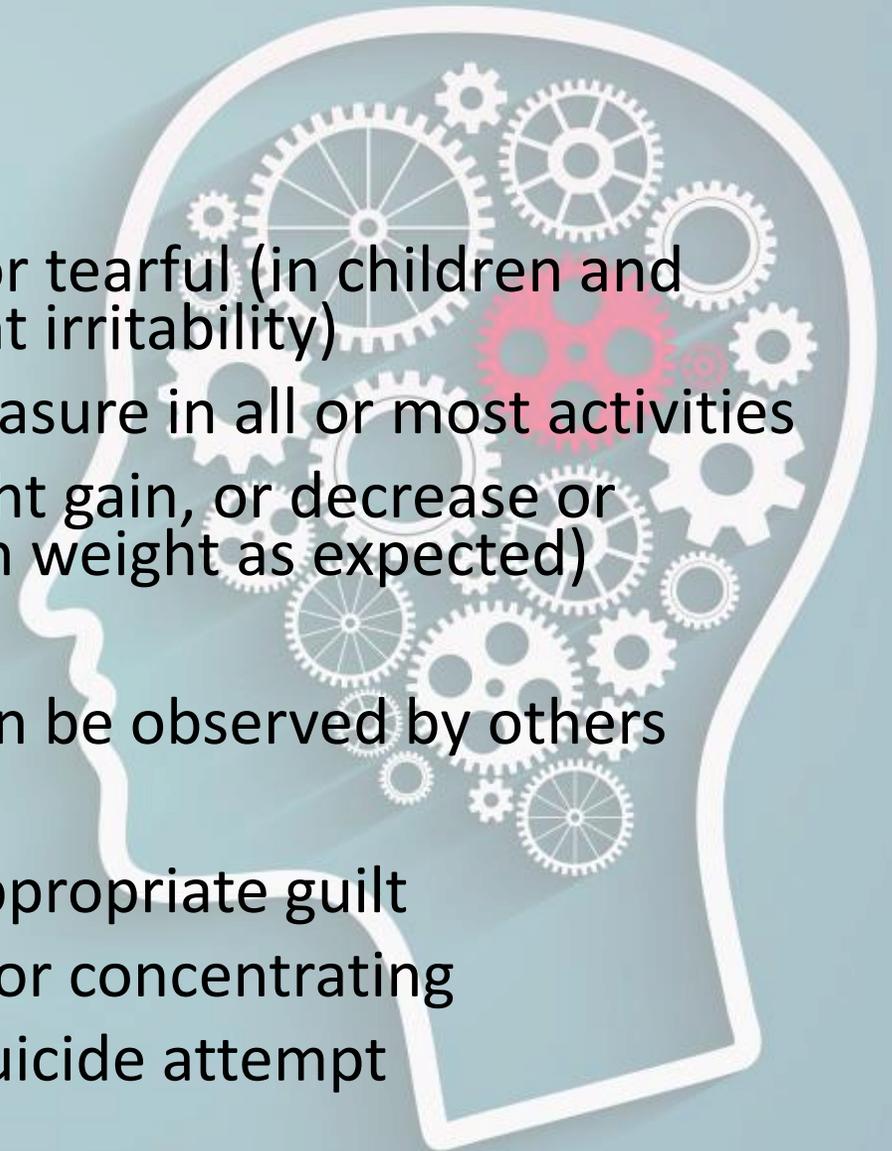
Common Psychological Disorders: Depression

- Depression ranges in seriousness from mild, temporary episodes of sadness to severe, persistent depression. Clinical depression is the more severe form of depression, also known as major depression or major depressive disorder



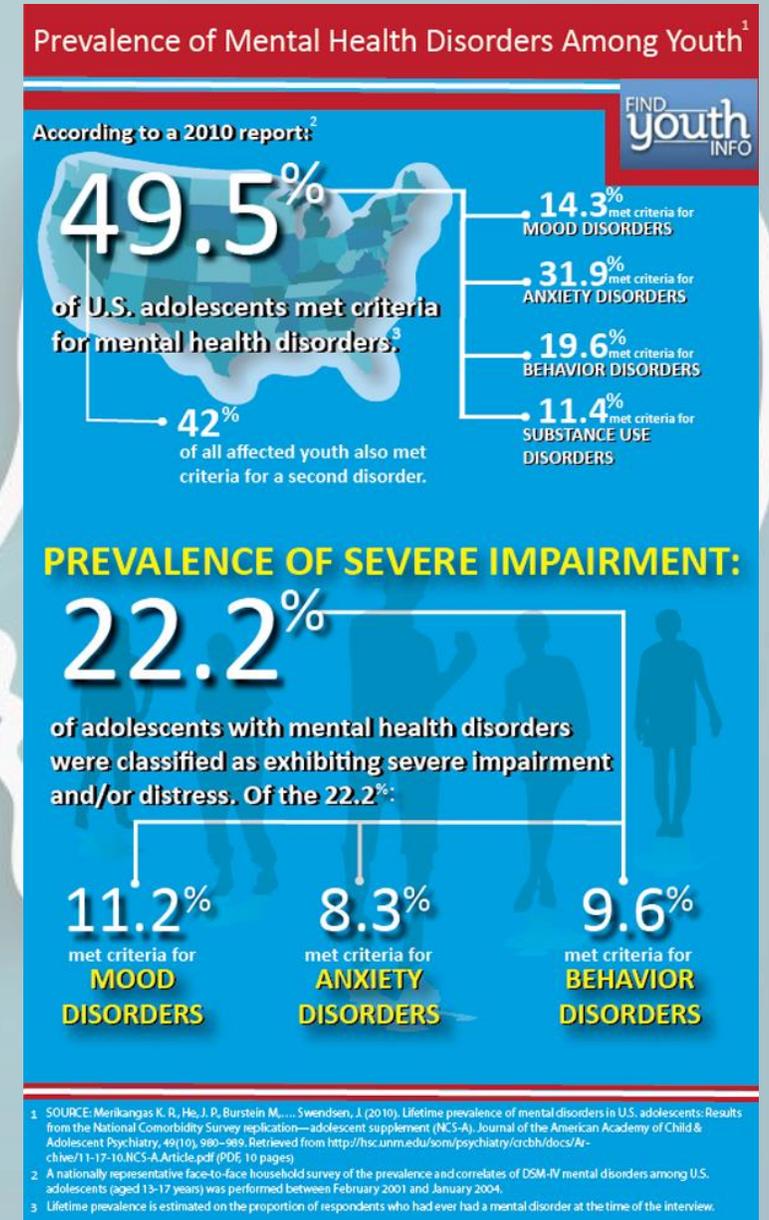
Symptoms of Depression

- Depressed mood, such as feeling sad, empty or tearful (in children and teens, depressed mood can appear as constant irritability)
- Significantly reduced interest or feeling no pleasure in all or most activities
- Significant weight loss when not dieting, weight gain, or decrease or increase in appetite (in children, failure to gain weight as expected)
- Insomnia or increased desire to sleep
- Either restlessness or slowed behavior that can be observed by others
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness, or excessive or inappropriate guilt
- Trouble making decisions, or trouble thinking or concentrating
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide, or a suicide attempt



Prevalence of Mental Illness

- The Midtown Manhattan Study (1962) reported that 55% of the general population have some form of mental illness



Treating Mental Illness

- The most important way of treating a mental illness is talking about it
 - A lot of cases can be cured with a support network of friends and family
 - Some cases may require care by a psychologist or medical professional
 - Use of therapy
 - Medication may be prescribed
- There has long been a negative stigma attached to mental illness
 - Having a mental illness does not mean an individual is weak
 - Treatment is crucial if mental illness becomes debilitating

