

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Under state and federal laws insurers are required to treat mental health no differently than a medical condition. Insurers are mandated to provide equal coverage; regulators describe this as having parity. Ultimately, this means one would not have higher deductibles or less benefits to seek solace of a mental health issue versus a medical one. Despite inconsistencies and a tangled web of regulatory systems with federal and state agencies at the helm, life is meant to improve for people with mental health disruptions.

What hasn't improved is the cultural stigma that resonates with many of us. From the days of considering women as hysterical, to today's revelation that the behavior is not gender specific but actually known as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Today, diagnosing children with oppositional defiant disorder, which often can be an adaptation to inappropriate attachment opportunities stays with them for a lifetime.

Even though the governmental leaders determine it no longer suffices to ignore the mental health plight, it does not take long to see why stigma still exists. Simply scanning the literature produces a myriad of reasons people give to remain silent. Appearing weak, effect on careers, witnessing others bad experiences after coming forward, losing friends, being mocked and believing it will go away, are among the top few.

As a mental health clinician, I can think of many other reasons too. However, I also see the shift that occurs when a client reaches out. Which is why the entire dilemma seems inexplicable to me personally. I recall not long ago when taking antidepressants was taboo and now America has the highest prescription rates of any country in the world.

Since there is irrefutable proof that therapy and or medication can help stop depression, suicidal ideation, marriage breakdown, anger adaptations, child and teen related problems and a host of other issues, it is clear cultural indoctrination runs rampant in society. Why belittle the very things that work?

Remember when being forced to put seat belts on children was frowned upon? Government was supposedly taking a parental role, yet, I quiver at the numbers of children whose lives have been spared. How about when smoking was considered vogue or a hand was slapped when a drunk driver killed another human being? All of these issues had to be curtailed via the highest authorities before they were considered lifesaving issues.

Now that the government has tried to correct the social stigma phenomena, it is up to the rest of us who want to keep families strong in America to step up and encourage good mental health. For every action there is a reaction, make yours a healthy one today.

