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Anosognosia and how to perceive your mental illness



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Anosognosia, also called "lack of insight," is a symptom of severe mental illness experienced by some that have an impaired ability to understand and perceive an illness. It is usually seen in people with mental illness and is the single most significant reason why individuals with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder refuse medications or do not seek treatment. Without awareness of the disease, refusing treatment appears rational, no matter how clear the need for treatment might be to the physician, allied health specialist, and family. Approximately 50% of individuals with schizophrenia and 40% with bipolar disorder have symptoms of anosognosia. Long recognized in people with central nervous system complications (CNS) i.e., stroke, Alzheimer's disease, and other neurological condition. Mistaken insight feels as real and convincing as other people's ability to perceive themselves. However, these misperceptions cause conflicts with others and increased anxiety. Lack of insight also typically causes a person to avoid treatment making it the most common reason for people to stop taking their medications. Moreover, as it is often combined with psychosis or mania, lack of insight can cause reckless or undesirable behavior. Studies of anosognosia in psychiatric disorders are producing a growing body of evidence of anatomical damage in the part of the brain involved with self-reflection. When taking medications, insight improves in some patients. Improving access to treatment for people too ill to seek help, including involuntary treatment when legal criteria are met, the treatment provider may use motivational enhancement therapy (MET) to help individuals see the potential benefits of therapy in a way that makes sense to them.

Biography

Henry A Montero Tapia is a licensed Mental Health Counselor, Nationally Board Certified, and Credential in Alcohol and Substance Abuse Counseling, Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist, HIV, and Infectious Disease Specialist. He is a Psychology PhD candidate from Capella University, and has completed his Master's degree in Mental Health from Manhattan College, and graduated Cum Laude from Monroe College. He has a fellowship from the Global Foundation for Democracy and Development. He is the behavioral health and substance services care management Director of Behavioral Health and Care Management at CCN General Medical PLLC; New York, NY. Also, he owns behavioral health medical center Alquimede Mental Health Counseling, PLLC. He has published in reputed journals and has been serving as an Opinionist and Writer for www.psychom.net and other publications.

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