

# Mental Health

Mental health is just as important as physical health and the two go hand in hand. This shift of considering individual health as a whole mind body experience is refreshing, but the idea still needs to spread and build from a definition into a cultural mindset. Patients with chronic kidney disease (CKD) and end-stage renal disease (ESRD) know that the numbers on the machine or lab printout don't tell the entire story. Research has shown that the death rate from chronic disease such as heart disease and diabetes is two to three times greater for people living with mental illnesses.[1] As you can see having a chronic condition can greatly impact your mental state and your mindset and emotions can also worsen the symptoms of your disease.

Mental health is defined as "a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community." [2] Therefore, if you do not have a healthy mental state it will be hard for you to live your life the way you normally would. Poor mental health can affect many aspects of a person's life, but it can be treated effectively so that you can function normally in your everyday life.

Getting a transplant can be stressful for both you and your family and feelings can increase if a friend or family member has decided to be a living donor. Everyone handles stress differently and kidney disease, treatments, medications and waiting can all add to this stress.

Many facilities will have a social worker and a psychiatrist available for consultation. These experts can help you rehabilitate, handle financial concerns, discuss family issues and can even just be another person to talk about life with.

You shouldn't feel embarrassed to seek help and that is exactly what the experts are for. Not getting help can not only impact the transplant itself, but also your life in general.

- **Trouble complying with your medication regimen** - Non-compliance to treatment is recognized as a problem for people with a mental illness, estimates of poor adherence range from 40%-80% [3]. If you do not take your medication properly your transplant will not be as effective.
- **Difficulty engaging in physical activity** - One of the symptoms of mental illness is fatigue. If you are suffering from this symptom it will make it hard to participate in healthy, physical activity.
- **Eating healthily** - When your mental status is comprised you are less likely to make healthy food choices that could have the potential to lead to poor nutritional status.
- **May alter your immune system function** - If you are stressed, your body's hormonal response alters your immune system function influencing your susceptibility to becoming ill. This can lead to an increased illness and death in

ESRD patients.[4]

- **Can lead to longer illness duration** - Because your mental state is comprised your medical regime may not be consistent and your immune system could be negatively affected. If this happens it will make it difficult for you to improve your outcome.

Additional information on mental health can be found here (link to other class). This class provides a background on mental health and can point you towards additional resources. Remember you are not alone and sometimes just a conversation can make all the difference in your wait or your recovery.

[1] Marc De Hert., Christoph U. Correll, Julio Bobes, Marcelo Cetkovich, Et. Al. Physical illness in patients with severe mental disorders. I. Prevalence, impact of medications and disparities in health care. *Official Journal of the World Psychiatric Association*. 2011 February; 10(1): 52-77. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3048500/> [1]

[2] World Health Organization. Mental Health. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/topics/mental\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/mental_health/en/) [2].

[3] Coombs Tim., Deane Frank, Lambert, Gordon, Griffiths, Rhonda., What Influences Patients? Medication Adherence?. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*. Volume 12(2) June 2003p 148-152. Retrieved from <http://www.nursing2007criticalcare.com/pt/re/merck/fulltext.00134462-200306000-00009.htm;jsessionid=R1TbCkLswZjpQ2bJ4yflkKyVT2VxM2DBQRyv0wDSw8hZsYWKB1Tf!1786591821?nav=reference> [3]

[4] Kimmel PL, Philips TM, Simmens SJ, et al., Immunologic function and survival in hemodialysis patients, *Kidney Int*, 1998;54:236-44. Retrieved from <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9648084> [4]

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**Source URL:** <http://www.dpcedcenter.org/classroom/during-and-after-your-kidney-transplant/mental-health>

**Links**

[1] <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3048500/>

[2] [http://www.who.int/topics/cmental\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/topics/cmental_health/en/)

[3] <http://www.nursing2007criticalcare.com/pt/re/merck/fulltext.00134462-200306000-00009.htm;jsessionid=R1TbCkLswZjpQ2bJ4yflkKyVT2VxM2DBQRyv0wDSw8hZsYWKB1Tf!1786591821!181195621?nav=reference>

[4] <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9648084>