Triggers for mental ill health

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Triggers are external factors that throw you off balance, even when you have been taking good care of yourself in every way possible. Everyone experiences Triggers, even people without mental health challenges. When Triggers happen, it can be difficult to coordinate your life. A big bill, physical illness, or bad news are all Triggers that may happen to anyone. Developing actions plans to use when Triggers occur can help get you back on track before things get worse. Identifying each Trigger as it happens and responding with an action plan is a powerful skill to enhance the quality of your life. You never need to be defenceless again!

RETHINK:

- Physical
- Social
- Environmental
- Psychological

Physical causes

Physical causes are those which are biological in nature. Someone might inherit characteristic from their family through their genes which mean they are much more at risk than other people.

It has also been found that people who have suffered head injuries can experience changes to their personality, and in some cases may begin to experience schizophrenia and psychotic type symptoms.

What happens during pregnancy can have affect on how the baby's brain develops. For example if a mother is taking drugs while she is pregnant, or if she gets a virus (like the flu).

There have been reports that suggest vitamin and mineral deficiencies such as Vitamin D, zinc and certain fatty acids may also be related to our mental health.

Social and environmental causes

Things that are going on around us, and how we feel about them can have a big impact on our mental health.

These might be things such as:

1. Where we live
2. Our place of work
3. Whether we have close family and friends
4. How and where we can relax.
Where we live

The physical environment where we live can be very stressful, particularly when there are problems with neighbours, or if there are high crime rates and other such issues.

Where you work

Whether you enjoy your work, or feel you are under too much pressure, are unable to find employment or hold down a job, can all put pressure on your mental well-being.

Families and Friends

When we face difficult times our support networks become very important – those who do not have close friends or families, or those who do not live near the people who support them may find it increasingly difficult to cope alone.

How and when to relax

All these kinds of problems will increase the amount of stress people are under, and can cause depression and anxiety especially in situations where people don't have a time or a place to relax.

Psychological factors

Your psychological state can influence your mental and emotional state, particularly if you are coping with traumatic and abusive past or current experiences. Significant life events, like bereavement, divorce or if you have self-destructive thought patterns and perceptions, can impact on your mental health.

For example, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety and in more extreme cases Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID – in the past referred to as multiple personality disorder) are all mental health conditions that are commonly found in people who have been abused.

The bigger picture

For many people with mental health problems, it is not a single factor or type of factor that has led to the development of their problems. It is often the case that a series of events have occurred, that have eventually triggered mental illness.

MIND:

- traumatic childhood and schooling
- bereavement
- stress at work
- unemployment