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The following slides were presented during the educational portion of IFFGD’s 2020 Virtual Advocacy Event. To view this presentation and the all videos available during this program, please visit https://bit.ly/Adv_Edu.
Making Mental Health Part of Your Healthcare Team

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Making MH part of your Team: Agenda

1. WHY?
2. WHO?
3. HOW?
4. WHAT?
Why Think About Mental Health?

Mental health is health and quality of life

The brain-gut axis

Inflammation

Patients struggling with medical conditions have improved outcomes when they work on stress and coping skills.
Mental Health Impact on QOL

Re-defining life with a chronic condition

Interpretation of being ill or disabled

Catastrophizing
Brain - Gut Axis

Embryological Origins of the Enteric Nervous System

A bidirectional communication pathway linking emotional and cognitive centers of the brain with peripheral intestinal functions (Calabotti, et al. 2015)

Dysbiosis of the axis by untreated mental health conditions results in worsening of GI symptoms (I.e. IBS)
Inflammation in the body from physical illness can be mimicked and worsened by stress and emotional issues.
Improved outcomes with Mental Health

Treating mental health symptoms can combat:

- Increased inflammation that worsens medical issues
- Improves control of heart rate and blood circulation
- Reduces abnormalities in stress hormones (cortisol)
- Reduces metabolic changes
Who is in Mental Health?

Psychiatrist / Psychiatry

- iatry refers to medical treatment
- Went to Medical School (MD)
- Provides medical care
- Assesses mental and physical aspects of your condition
- Can communicate with your medical team, “doctor to doctor”
- Prescribe medications if needed
- Have undergone thousands of hours of training in residency and fellowships to work with patients
- Highest standard of care in outpatient Mental Health

Psychologist / Psychology

- ology refers to the study of
- Have a PhD or PsyD
- Can often perform helpful psychological testing
- Often research focused in background

Can conduct therapy
Who is in Mental Health?
Types of Psychiatrists

- General Adult Psychiatry
- Child and Adolescent Psychiatry
- Forensic Psychiatry
- Geriatric Psychiatry
- Consultation Liaison Psychiatry
  - Fellowship trained to work with medically complex patients
    - May have sub-sub specialized in working with GI patients
  - More comfortable dealing with medication interactions and side effects in medically ill patients

Be Active. Be Heard. Make a Difference.
How Mental Health Fits In

The Goal: Decreased inflammatory markers from depression, anxiety, stress overall = decreasing additional issues that confuse your symptoms.

An objective outlet to discuss your frustrations with someone who understands.

More time with a medical doctor to discuss what’s going on in your body and mind

Counseling on unnecessary treatments
What: Options in Mental Health

Medication Management
- Many types of medication options
- A psychiatrist can expertly weigh out interactions and side effect possibilities with you

Psychotherapy
- Supportive
- Cognitive Behavioral
- Biofeedback/Mindfulness
- Coping based skills (DBT)
Collaborative Care

Patient Advocacy is the responsibility of all parts of the team, including you!

In mental health treatment you can work on advocating for yourself.

Collaboration of care with other doctors in your team through a release of information.

Collateral Information

How can I get my doctors to talk to each other?

I don’t feel comfortable asking questions in my GI appointments
Preparing your Toolbox

Having coping skills on hand or a coping plan for tough days, conversations, and hospitalizations

Working on understanding what your chronic illness means to you

Understanding your body better
- Body Scanning
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Meditation

Be Active. Be Heard. Make a Difference.
Connect and Stay in Touch

GI Psychiatry: gipsychiatry.com
Instagram: The GI Psychiatrist
Blog/Podcast: The GI Psychiatrist (Coming soon)

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