



Mental Health Mondays

Epilepsy
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What is Epilepsy?

March 26th is Epilepsy Awareness Day. Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that results in seizures, or brief surges of uncontrolled electrical activity in the brain. **Epilepsy affects approximately 2 out of 100 people, and people with learning disabilities are significantly more affected with 1 in 3 people having an epilepsy diagnosis in addition to their disability.**

How does epilepsy impact mental health?

Epilepsy can impair normal brain functions that may lead to psychiatric difficulties. Adults who experience seizures often show higher levels of depression and underemployment, and families of children with epilepsy often show higher levels of family disintegration. Leading up to seizures, abnormal behavior may occur. This behavior varies by person, but can often present as:

- Hyperactivity, problems in paying attention or controlling temper
- Anxiety and frustration due to problems in understanding and expressing ideas
- Social difficulties and impulsive behavior from problems in recognizing social signals
- Disorganization, acting without regard to consequences



What can you do to help?

Even if medications or surgery cure the seizures, problems with language, learning, and behavior may remain. Adjusting the way you interact with someone when they are experiencing abnormal behavior can make all the difference. Remember to use empathy, encouragement, and help the person with epilepsy connect with resources like the **Managing Life with Epilepsy Group**. This 8-week, evidence-based course (SMART) was designed by researchers at Case Western Reserve University and focuses on helping adults with epilepsy feel more confident in coping with and managing their physical and emotional health. **Each week, participants meet virtually as a small group to discuss different topics in epilepsy self-management.** This course is held via Zoom or by phone, and you will receive a participant manual to help you follow along weekly. The weekly groups are led by a trained nurse educator and peer educator and also provides follow-up upon conclusion of the group to help address any questions/concerns. To sign up for this course, click on the following link:

[Community SMART Flyer](#)

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