

Leventhals illness dimensions



Running head: Leventhal's Illness Dimensions How people understand disease is critical for their behavior when they believe they are ill. Discuss each of the five components that Leventhal and his associates have identified as components of illness conceptualizations in terms of their implications for illness behavior.

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How people understand disease is critical for their behavior when they believe they are ill. Discuss each of the five components that Leventhal and his associates have identified as components of illness conceptualizations in terms of their implications for illness behavior.

People by use of their common sense search for the meaning of somatic events and tend to attribute these events to a specific cause. According to Taylor, (1999), the presence of symptoms and also how a person interprets them affect his/her behavior. Equally important are the attributions which the person makes out of the symptoms being experienced. Research has shown that majority of the people seeking medication on not so serious symptoms are later diagnosed to suffer from depression related illnesses. The explanation here is that the people interpret the symptoms to mean presence of physical diseases.

Leventhal proposed five dimensions of illness in which illness experiences are organized. The five dimensions are: control and curability. Cause, Timeline, consequences and identity (Leventhal, Benyamini, Brownlee, Diefenbach, M. Leventhal, Miller, L., & Robitaille, 1997).

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Control and curability

A patient's perceptions of how they can control an illness and the possible outcome changes their behavior. When administering treatment for illness perceptions the goal should be to influence behavior. In the (Development and Diversity. Vol. 4) it is noted that illness representations affect the measure a patient will take in order to adapt to an illness as his/her emotional responses. To adapt a patient may use escape-avoidance mechanisms and wishful thinking. This, illustrates that it is crucial for clinicians to examine individuals coping

Causes.

In regard to Leventhal's Common-Sense Model (CSM) of Illness self-regulation, Illness behaviors are usually guided " by cognitive representations of the Illness and associated emotional reactions" Gochman, 1997.(p. 78). What one believes to be the Illness cause influences how he/she goes ahead to control the illness and behave during the illness period..

Timeline.

Although many people are not good at tracking their physiological processes, the belief most are keen to maintain an understanding of their bodily condition (Conrad, 1997). This in turn causes them to make interpretations about their illnesses. This is important in understanding how individuals behave on contracting diseases or becoming ill.

Identity.

Leventhal et al.(1990) noted that people construct their own individual representation of symptoms or illness which ends up influencing their behavior in terms of trying to get help as well as complying with their

situations. This influences how an individual perceive their illness.

Finally, the realization of the fact that one has a specific illness results to pressure to generate certain behaviors. It is worthy noting that, illness representations influences how patients act upon their perceived symptoms. For instance a feeling of wellness may cause a patient to halt drug intake even when no such authority has been granted by the physician.

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