

# The components of illness representation

Psychology



Running head: The components of Illness Representation

The components of Illness Representation According to the hypothesis given by physicians, an illness can be represented in seven major aspects. These aspects include; identifying the illness, estimating the time that the illness will take to go away, stating the expected symptoms, the cause of the illness, treatment, control, how to cure the illness and the illness consistency. As a practical example, a person may develop a sudden fever and he or she can take this as a sign of developing a cold. With this knowledge of being able to hypothesize the possible illness that one may be developing, one can be able to predict how long the illness will stay. The individual can be able to prepare for the symptoms of the identified illness and can even predict the parts of the body that will be affected by the illness. This enables the person to pinpoint the activities that he or she will not be able to take part in during the illness. These could include the various jobs that the person engages in and the illness may even affect one's social life whereby he or she may have limited access to his or her close relatives if the illness is highly contagious. The ability to hypothesize the symptoms of an illness and the duration of treatment may have a psychological effect on someone. This is mainly manifested by depression due to the knowledge of the expected outcomes at every stage of the illness. The person may feel left out and be rendered physically useless. This is stressing especially when one is sent to bed rest. There is also the aspect of fear of contracting other severe illnesses. Some symptoms may be very physically painful as well. The emotional effects of an illness may cause depression and stress on the patient and those closest. If an illness is identified as highly contagious, the patient is isolated and quarantined to safeguard the health of the rest of the people around him. It

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is, therefore, important that the severity of an illness be determined on its onset stages. This may help to save others from contracting the illness although it has a negative effect on the people suffering from the illness. When categorizing illnesses, one should indicate whether it is contagious and also mention the most susceptible groups of people in the society who can contract the illness. The psychological and emotional aspects of an illness represents its mental effects while the social effects of the illness are represented by the actual symptoms of the illness and its effects on the individual as well as the people surrounding them. These aspects of illnesses are very important in categorizing an illness, to give the required information about it in terms of behavior and the ideas that go along with it.

The perception that an individual has on a particular illness influences the way he or she deals with it. It determines the level of psychological effect that it has on the individual since he or she has a clear mental picture of what to expect. Knowledge on a certain disease also determines how an individual chooses to deal with the illness in terms of seeking treatment. The knowledge gained from other people in the society about a certain illness may also come in handy in dealing with a particular illness whereby the close family members and friends may give useful information on how to treat the disease. This is made possible by positively identifying a particular illness.

In conclusion, identifying an illness has psychological, emotional and social effects on an individual. Dealing with the psychological effects of an illness is difficult and it takes a lot of time for one to accept his condition. The emotional stress involved with illnesses can make the illness to get worse. It is therefore important for one to uphold a positive mind. Furthermore, close relatives and friends should provide moral support. The society is very

judgmental when it comes to people developing certain illnesses and this may give the wrong perception of the severity of an illness. It is important for one to research far and wide in order to get the correct information about a particular illness. This helps one in making informed decisions on the most effective treatment and how to deal with the disease. The knowledge of the illness and its hypothesized symptoms, as well as its treatment timeline can help one to decide what kind of treatment to opt for. The members of the society may also be in a position to advise the patient on the possible viable treatment methods. It is, therefore, very important that one diagnoses his or her illness correctly since a misrepresentation of an illness can have serious negative consequences.