

Glossary

A) Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer disease is the most common cause of dementia - a slow decline in mental ability. It affects one in twenty people over 65, and more than one in ten of those over 85. Alzheimer disease is caused by the gradual death of certain brain cells, especially in the areas involved in memory. The memory loss in Alzheimer disease can eventually be devastating: patients often don't recognise their families, and forget where they live or how to take care of themselves.

B) Anxiety

We all feel anxious sometimes - walking alone at night, for example or before an exam. Anxiety can be a normal useful emotion, helping us to recognise and cope with stressful or dangerous situations. But anxiety, especially when it is severe, sometimes stops us from leading a normal life. Panic attacks, phobias, obsessive compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder are all forms of extreme anxiety.

C) Brain Disorder

Any disorder or disease of the brain.

D) Brain Scan

This can be done by using ultrasound, X rays (called CT scan) or magnetic resonance (called MR) to create a picture of the brain in order to gain information about it.

E) Depression

The word 'depression' describes a range of moods - from someone who has occasional low spirits to a severe problem that interferes with the sufferer's everyday life. People with serious depression have several symptoms, including lack of energy and motivation, weight and appetite changes, sleep problems, anxiety and tearfulness. Some sufferers feel suicidal. In manic depression, these low periods are interspersed with periods of mania - an extremely active state, sometimes with delusions or, rarely, hallucinations

F) Genetics

The field of science that looks at how traits are passed down from one generation to another, through the genes.

G) Memory Loss

Partial or total loss of memory. "He has a total blackout for events of the evening"

H) Neuroethics

Neuroethics is a new field concerned with the benefits and dangers of modern research on the brain, and by extension, with the social, legal and ethical implications of treating or manipulating the mind. Neuroethics critically examines the rapidly expanding fields of neuroscience.

D) Neuron

The nervous system is a network of cells called neurons which transmit information in the form of electrical signals. Your brain has around 100 billion neurons, and each communicates with thousands of others - as many connections as in the world's telephone system, the biggest machine on the planet. Neurons communicate with each other at special junctions where chemicals help to bridge the gap between one neuron and the next.

J) Neuroscientist

A neurobiologist who specializes in the study of the brain.

K) Post Traumatic Stress

Post-traumatic stress disorder affects people who have suffered a terrifying experience like a violent attack, car crash or earthquake. Sufferers often have recurrent nightmares of their ordeal and may feel guilty about their survival. They may also suffer from vivid memories or flashbacks - reliving the event through sounds, smells or feelings that seem as real as they did at the time. Post-traumatic stress disorder was first recognised as 'shell shock' in veterans of the First World War.

L) Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia affects one person in a hundred at some point in their lives. The illness usually starts in the late teens or early twenties, and alters the sufferer's experience and interpretation of the world. This

may lead to delusions - strongly held false beliefs. Experience of hallucinations (particularly hearing voices) is a common experience, but incoherent thoughts, personality change, absence of emotion and depression can occur as well.

M) Trauma

A physical injury or wound caused by an external force of violence, which may cause death or permanent disability. Trauma is also used to describe severe emotional or psychological shock or distress.