Biomedical Therapies

Based on the idea that mental health issues are caused by medical reasons…genetics, chemical imbalances…

Psychiatrists can prescribe medication…psychologists can not

Psychopharmacology:

Development began in the 1950s

4 types of psychiatric drugs

1. **Antianxiety drugs**: a.k.a. minor tranquilizers

 - produce relaxation or reduce anxiety, reduce muscle tension

 - increase the effectiveness of inhibitory neurotransmitters = a claming effect on the neuorns

 - among the most used and abused drugs today

 -Valium, Xanax

1. **Antipsychotic drugs**: a.k.a. major tranquilizers

 - used to diminish or eliminate hallucinations, delusions, withdrawal and apathy

 - to treat schizophrenia and other acute psychotic states

 -Haldol, Clozaril

1. **Mood Stabilizers**:

 - to treat bipolar disorder – help break the manic/depressive cycle

 - Lithium – works slowly make take 3-4 weeks

1. **Antidepressants**:

 - used to treat depression, some anxiety, and sometimes used to treat bulimia

 -Tofranil, Nardil, Prozac, Buspar, Effexor

Electroconvulsive Therapy: (ECT)

 - electroshock therapy

 -a **current** of moderate intensity is passed through the brain between 2 electrodes placed on the outside of the head---for less than a second

 - triggers widespread firing of the neurons—**convulsions**

 - these convulsions produce many changes in the central and peripheral nervous system

 - early on patients might receive 100s of treatments, now a patient would receive **12** or less treatments

 - for serious depression…when drug therapy has not works

Psychosurgery:

 - brain surgery to reduce serious, debilitating psychological problems

 - this would always be a **LAST RESORT**

**Concerns:**

Drugs= not a “cure” may provide relief form some symptoms…many side effects, some of which can be VERY major…like involuntary movement of the face and tongue (antipsychotic drugs)…more common side effects include weight gain, sexual dysfunction, memory difficulties

ECT and Psychosurgery = we do not fully understand why/how ECT can help alleviate depression. With these methods the side effects could be deadly