

Best Practices for Addressing Mental Illness Among TANF Recipients

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What are Your Thoughts on Mental Illness?

Friends

They don't call me sad.

They don't call me bad.

They don't call me mad.

They don't call me.

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What is Mental Illness

What Is Mental Illness?

- Mental illness is a term that refers to disorders that are characterized by disturbances in thinking, mood, or behavior, or a combination thereof, associated with distress or impaired functioning.
- Mental illness can be caused by physical illnesses, biochemical abnormalities in the brain function, stress and other environment factors. Often a combination of these factors contributes to causing a mental illness.
- U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Mental Health defines mental health and illness along a continuum.

Attitudes Toward Mental Illness

- Negative attitudes toward people living with mental illnesses have persisted over time

>70% of population would not want a person with depression to marry into their family

70% of respondents rated people with schizophrenia as dangerous

73% of characters with mental illnesses in TV dramas were portrayed as violent

Only 19% of people said they would be comfortable around someone with a mental illness

People with mental illness are viewed more negatively than are ex-convicts

TV is one of the main sources of information on stigma

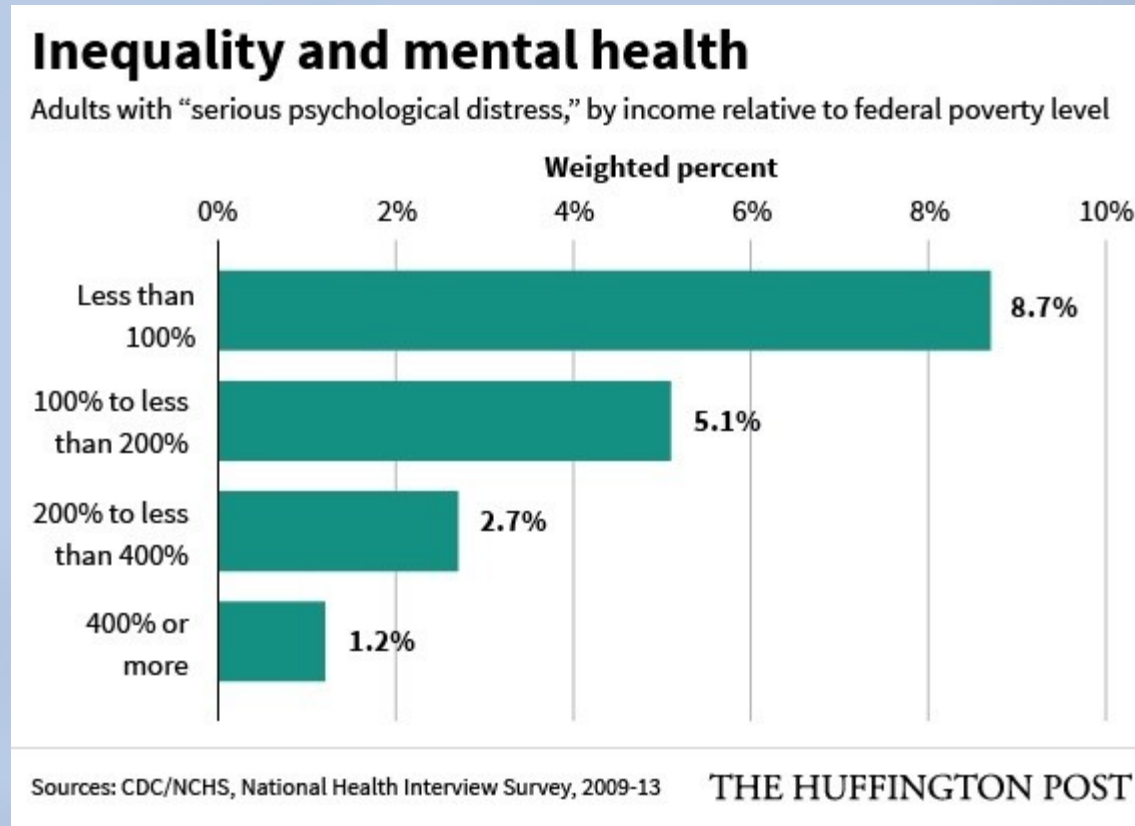
Truth about Mental Illness

- One in every four Americans suffers from a diagnosable mental illness in a given year
- Statistics show that only one-fourth of these individuals seek treatment
- Four of the ten leading causes of disability worldwide are mental illnesses
- Mental illness does not discriminate – affects people of every race, gender and economic background
- Mental illness is a serious medical condition and must be treated as such
- Direct cost of mental health services in US is approx. \$69 billion
- **Low-income families and certain minority groups experience higher-than-average rates of mental illness**

Factors Associated with Higher-Than-Average Rates of Mental Illness

- Income is one of the strongest predictors of mental illness
- People in the lowest SES group are about two-and-a-half times more likely to have a mental illness
- Higher rates among poor women, particularly those who have experienced trauma
- African Americans and Native Americans experience higher rates
- Between one-fourth and one-third of current welfare recipients have symptoms of a mental illness

Inequality and Mental Health



According to the CDC, 8.7% of people with incomes below the poverty line reported serious psychological distress from 2009 – 2013. For people with annual incomes at or above four times the poverty line was just 1.2%

30.4% of working-age adults with serious distress had no health insurance, compared with just 20.5% of working-age adults without psychological distress

Difficulties Accessing Treatment

Less than one-third of adults with a diagnosed mental illness receive treatment

- Cost of services
- Stigma Associated with Mental Illness
- Lack of Culturally Sensitive and Bilingual Services
- Concern with the Quality of Mental Health Treatment
- Living in a rural location

Best Practices for Expanding Mental Health Services Available to Welfare Recipients

- Linking Clients to Existing Mental Health Providers
- Expanding the Capacity of Existing Mental Health Providers
- Develop Mental Health Programs in Welfare Offices
- Utilize SOAR Benefits Specialists
- Work with Certified Peer Specialists
- Mental Health First Aid Training

Linking Clients to Existing Mental Health Providers

- Organizing interagency meetings between state and local welfare policymakers, mental health system administrators and other major community agencies
- Co-locating mental health workers within local welfare offices
- Forming interagency case staffings

Expanding the Capacity of Existing Mental Health Providers

- Funding a staff at a community-based mental health organization
- Funding an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at a community-based mental health provider – to provide support for welfare recipients managing the challenges of working with a mental illness – preventative measure
- Funding slots in a supported work program – many communities have existing supported work programs – may want to consider paying for a designated number of client slots in these programs
- Providing funds to support a satellite office of a mental health organization – especially important in rural areas – contract with a mental health professional to work a couple of days a week in a rural mental health agency or welfare office

Develop Mental Health Programs in Welfare Offices

- **Training mental health caseworkers**– welfare caseworkers could be trained to handle a specialized caseload of clients who live with a mental illness
- **Develop programs that encourage informal support networks** – family run organizations (Federation of Families)
- **Encouraging intensive case management**– this model involves assigning a case manager a fewer number of welfare cases, but the caseload is comprised of individuals who are hard to employ and require additional attention and coordination of services
- **Hiring mental health counselors** – a full time mental health counselor on staff at a welfare office could conduct assessments and handle specialized caseloads or provide consultation services
- **Developing a supported work program** – it offers welfare recipients a chance to gain employment experience and have flexibility and services needed while getting treatment

Utilizing SOAR Benefits Specialists

- People living with a mental illness are often unable to work
- SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery (SOAR) is a program that assists people complete the application
- Using a SOAR Benefits Specialist increases a person's chances of being approved from 10-15% to over 85%
- One in every four adult TANF recipients has a disability, defined as a physical, mental or emotional problem that keeps the individual from working or that limits the amount of work he/she can do
- SSI does not impose work requirements and provides benefits as long as the individual's disabling condition persists

SSI/SSDI Eligibility

To be eligible to receive either social security disability or qualify for SSI benefits, the following eligibility criteria must apply--

1. The individual's condition must be severe. Not every condition is actually considered to be severe. How is severity measured? Severity is, to some extent, a subjective determination; however, the social security administration tends to classify severe versus non-severe impairments by whether or not they significantly interfere with the individual's normal ADLs, or activities of daily living.

For adults, this will be reflected in their ability or inability to engage in work activity.

For children, an impact on daily activities will be reflected in the child's ability to engage in age-appropriate activities, the standard by which disability is measured for children.

2. The condition must last at least 12 months. This is the minimum time requirement for social security disability and SSI. If a claimant's medical records indicate that the condition is severe and even disabling, but will resolve to a non-disabling or non-severe state before one year, the claimant will receive a durational denial. Duration is how the social security administration decides that a claimant's disability is likely to be permanent.

3. The condition must impose enough physical or mental limitations, or both, that it eliminates the claimant's ability to go back to one of their former jobs (potentially any of their past work performed within the last 15 years). It must also be severe enough that the claimant cannot be expected to use their education and work skills, and remaining functional abilities, to do some type of other work.

Utilizing Peer Specialists

- Some community organizations have had success with peer-oriented programs helping develop stable and supportive relationships
- Peer Specialists are people in recovery who have been trained to help others locate resources, overcome the stigma and provide support
- Becoming a billable Medicaid code in many states

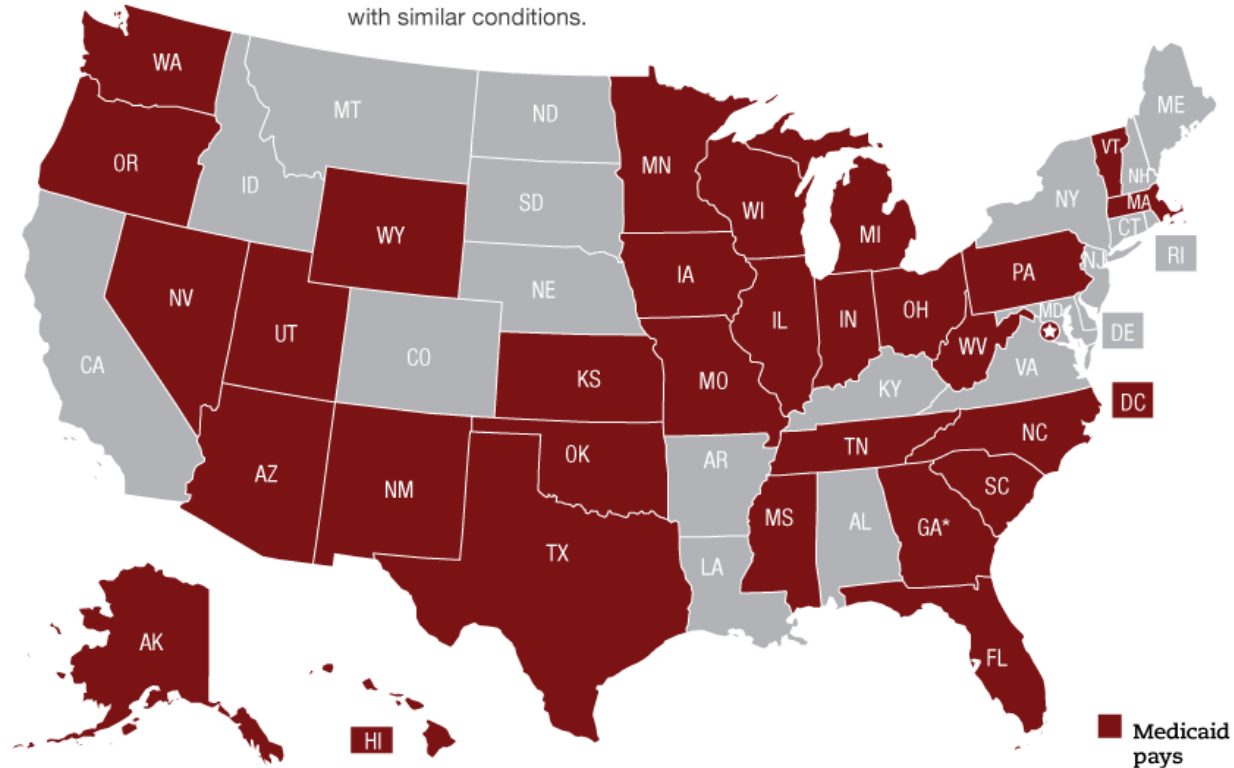
Mental Health Peer Specialists

STATELINE INFOGRAPHIC

Mental Health Peer Specialists

States where Medicaid pays for them

In 31 states, Medicaid pays for licensed peer specialists, counselors recovering from severe mental illness or substance addiction who are trained to help others with similar conditions.



Source: OptumHealth and Appalachian Consulting Group
NOTE: In Georgia, Medicaid pays peer specialists to provide "whole health" counseling.

StateLine infographic by Adam Rotmil and Christine Vestal
September 11, 2013

Mental Health First Aid Training

Mental Health First Aid teaches you:

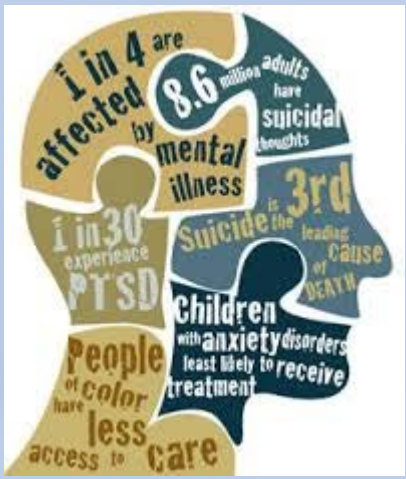
- Signs of addictions and mental illnesses
- 5-step action plan to assess a situation and help
- Impact of mental and substance use disorders
- Local resources and where to turn for help

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org



Resources

- <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20439371>
- <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/~media/publications/pdfs/addressmental.pdf>
- http://www.ssa.gov/disabilityresearch/documents/tsdtp_ssi_applicated_embedded_full_file.pdf
- <http://www.ssdrc.com/disabilityquestions4-5.html>
- <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2013/09/11/peers-seen-easing-mental-health-worker-shortage>
- <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/cs/>



YOU'D NEVER SAY, "IT'S JUST CANCER, GET OVER IT."

So why do some say that about depression?

Learn more of DepressionIsReal.org

"Mental illness is an equal-opportunity illness. Every one of us is impacted by mental illness. One in five adults are dealing with this illness, and many are not seeking help because the stigma prevents that."

Margaret Larson
nashville.com

Labels are for...

Clothes } ... not people

STAMP OUT STIGMA

Mental Health
illness

stand up against stigma

No Health without Mental Health

see me . I'm a person. Just like you.

STAND UP TO STIGMA

Let's talk about MENTAL HEALTH

SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH AND END STIGMA!!

Mental Illness is not Contagious

You Can't Catch it by Being Kind

Stand Against Stigma

Changing minds about mental illness.

HELP US TO STAMP OUT STIGMA

One in four people has a **mental illness**. You can be the **one** that helps.

For More Information

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