

What You Need to Know...



Did You Know? Mental Health Facts

General Public

- More than 54 million Americans have a mental disorder in any given year, although fewer than 8 million seek treatment (SGRMH, 1999).
- Depression and anxiety disorders — the two most common mental illnesses — each affect 19 million American adults annually (NIMH, 1999).
- Approximately 12 million women in the United States experience depression every year — roughly twice the rate of men (NIMH, 1999).
- One percent of the population (more than 2.5 million Americans) has schizophrenia (Schizophrenia Bulletin, 1998).
- Bipolar disorder, also known as manic-depressive illness, affects more than 2 million Americans (NIMH, 2000).
- Each year, eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa affect millions of Americans, 85-90 percent of whom are teens and young adult women (NMHA, 2000).
- Depression greatly increases the risk of developing heart disease. People with depression are four times more likely to have a heart attack than those with no history of depression (NIMH, 1998).
- Approximately 15 percent of all adults who have a mental illness in any given year also experience a co-occurring substance abuse disorder, which complicates treatment (SGRMH, 1999).
- Up to one-half of all visits to primary care physicians are due to conditions that are caused or exacerbated by mental or emotional problems (CFHC, 1998).

Minorities

- Adult Caucasians who have either depression or an anxiety disorder are more likely to receive treatment than adult African Americans with the same disorders even though the disorders occur in both groups at about the same rate, taking into account socioeconomic factors (SGRMH, 1999).
- The rate of illicit drug use is 10.6 percent among Native Americans, 7.7 percent among African Americans, 6.8 percent among Hispanics (all races), 6.6 percent among Caucasians, and 3.2 percent among Asian Americans (SAMHSA, 1999).
- About twice as many African Americans went without health insurance in 1998 and 1999 than did Caucasians (USCB, 1999).
- More than half of all African-Americans and Native Americans are anticipated to use public insurance to pay for inpatient mental health treatment, compared to 34 percent of Caucasians (SAMHSA, 1998).
- Misdiagnosis and inadequate treatment often occurs in minority communities. Factors that can contribute include a general mistrust of medical health professionals, cultural barriers, co-occurring disorders, socioeconomic factors, and primary reliance on family and the religious community during times of distress (NMHA, 2000).

Children and Families

- One in five children have a diagnosable mental, emotional or behavioral disorder. And up to one in 10 may suffer from a serious emotional disturbance. Seventy percent of children, however, do not receive mental health services (SGRMH, 1999).
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder is one of the most common mental disorders in children, affecting 3 to 5 percent of school-age children (NIMH, 1999).
- As many as one in every 33 children and one in eight adolescents may have depression (CMHS, 1998).
- Once a child experiences an episode of depression, he or she is at risk of having another episode within the next five years (CMHS, 1998).
- Teenage girls are more likely to develop depression than teenage boys (NIMH, 2000).

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- Children and teens that have a chronic illness, endure abuse or neglect, or experience other trauma have an increased risk of depression (NIMH, 2000).
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death for 15- to 24-year-olds and the sixth leading cause of death for 5- to 14-year-olds. The number of attempted suicides is even higher (AACAP, 1997).
- Studies have confirmed the short-term efficacy and safety of treatments for depression in youth (NIMH, 2000).
- Alcohol, marijuana, inhalants and club drugs are the most frequently used drugs among middle- and high-school youth (SAMHSA, 2000)
- Research has shown that use of club drugs such as Ecstasy and GHB can cause serious health problems and, in some cases, death. Used in combination with alcohol, these drugs pose even more danger (NIDA, 1999).
- Children and adolescents increasingly believe that regular alcohol and drug use is not dangerous (SAMHSA, 2000).
- Among middle- and high-school students, less than 20 percent of young people between the ages of 12 and 17 report using alcohol in the previous month, and less than 4 percent report drinking heavily in the previous month (SAMHSA, 2000).
- Young people are beginning to drink at younger ages. This is troubling particularly because young people who begin drinking or using drugs before age 15 are four times more likely to become addicted than those who begin at age 21 (SAMHSA, 2000).
- Children of alcohol- and drug-addicted parents are up to four times more likely to develop substance abuse and mental health problems than other children. (NACOA, 1998)
- Twenty percent of youths in juvenile justice facilities have a serious emotional disturbance and most have a diagnosable mental disorder. Up to an additional 30 percent of youth in these facilities have substance abuse disorders or co-occurring substance abuse disorders (OJJDP, 2000).

Older Adults

- Late-life depression affects about 6 million adults, but only 10 percent ever receive treatment (NMHA, 1998).
- Older Americans are more likely to commit suicide than any other age group. Although they constitute only 13 percent of the U.S. population, individuals age 65 and older account for 20 percent of all suicides (NIMH, 2000).
- At least 10 to 20 percent of widows and widowers develop clinically significant depression within one year of their spouse's death (SGRMH, 1999).
- Among adults age 55 and older, 11.4 percent meet the criteria for having an anxiety disorder (SGRMH, 1999).
- Alcohol abuse and dependence is four times as prevalent among men over the age of 65 than among women in the same age group (SGRMH, 1999).

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