Mental Health Crisis - COVID-19 Related and Beyond

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Effects and Stats
Effects of Pandemics

Epidemics and pandemics propagate enduring, entrenched FEAR and Erratic behavior.

Impactful effects on Mental Illness can be conceptualized in several ways:

- Impact on Existing Mental Illness
- Precipitation of new-onset mental symptom
- Debilitation of Caregivers and Caregiving systems
Impact on All Psychiatric Conditions
Pre-COVID Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders

Among those with a substance use disorder:
- 2 IN 5 (38.5% or 7.4M) struggled with illicit drugs
- 3 IN 4 (73.1% or 14.1M) struggled with alcohol use
- 1 IN 9 (11.5% or 2.2M) struggled with illicit drugs and alcohol

Among those with a mental illness:
- 1 IN 4 (25.5% or 13.1M) had a serious mental illness

In 2019, 61.2M Americans had a mental illness and/or substance use disorder—an increase of 5.9% over 2018 composed entirely of increases in mental illness.
Younger adults, racial/ethnic minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers reported having experienced disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation.

Source: https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm
Deaths of Despair

In the context of COVID-19, deaths of despair should be seen as the epidemic within the pandemic.

Well Being Trust (2020) predicted there may be up to 154,000 deaths of despair related to COVID-19.
People with serious mental illness (SMI) are at increased risk of being infected by coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and have higher subsequent rates of hospitalization, morbidity, and mortality.

Li et.al., JAMA 2020
Wang Q, Volkow, ND et.al., World Psychiatry 2020
Substance Use During the Pandemic

- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, as of June 2020, 13% of Americans reported starting or increasing substance use as a way of coping with stress or emotions related to COVID-19.
- Overdoses have also spiked since the onset of the pandemic.
- Rates are the highest ever recorded in a 12 month period.
Substance Use During the Pandemic: Drug Overdose Deaths

Percent Change for Louisiana

31.3% ▲

Figure 1a. 12 Month-ending Provisional Counts of Drug Overdose Deaths: Louisiana

Figure 1b. Percent Change in Reported 12 Month-ending Count of Drug Overdose Deaths, by Jurisdiction: September 2020 to September 2021
Fatal Overdose* Comparison by Year
Louisiana, 2018 - 2020**

Source: Louisiana Electronic Event Registration System, extracted 03/2021 by the Louisiana Opioid Surveillance Initiative.
*“Overdose” deaths are defined as those where a drug poisoning was certified in the death record as the primary cause of death.
**2020 data are preliminary and do not represent the final count for 2020 overdose deaths.
NOTE: Louisiana was under a “stay at home” order between March 22 and May 15 in 2020. Phase 1 began May 15 and ended September 11.

Legend:
- Drug Deaths
- Opioid Poisoning Deaths
- Synthetic Opioid Poisoning Deaths
Drivers for Increased Drug Use and Overdose

- Shifts in less potent drug availability
- Economic stress, fears and loneliness
- Reduction in resilience-promoting activities, like physical activity and social interactions
- Overdose risks associated with isolated drug use
- Closures of treatment facilities with reductions in care.
COVID, COVID Vaccinations and People of Color

- Disproportionality in healthcare - All Major systems for POCs.
- COVID-19 - poor generational healthcare = higher morbidity and mortality = Compounded Traumatization
- Result - Paralyzing Fear and Distrust of all Systems including Healthcare
Practice Implications
Implementation and use of telehealth as a mode of service delivery has been increasing in recent years.
COVID-19 Pandemic and Telehealth

By 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic makes it imperative for clinical practice to adapt rapidly to meet patient needs for SUD treatment while reducing risk of COVID-19 infection; hence, many providers are now using telehealth for the first time.
Pre-COVID Barriers:

- Regulatory (insurance reimbursement and state licensure requirements.)
- Provider-based
- Patient-based
States vary widely in the adoption of telehealth laws, waiving prescriber barriers, for SUD as well as controlled medications.
Billing and Reimbursement

- The billing codes for telehealth service types are the same for in-person services.
- The claims for telehealth must include 2 specific modifiers for reimbursement.
- The reimbursement rate is the same for telehealth and in-person visits.
What could be lost with a Regression in Telehealth Law?

- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act lifted geographic restrictions allowing persons in underserved areas to reach out across state lines and connect with practitioners in locations where services are easier to come by.
- The Interim Final Rule allows telehealth sessions that utilize audio only to be treated as equivalent to audiovisual sessions.
- HIPAA restrictions loosened throughout the pandemic

What about Future planning for reimbursements?

- CMS is contemplating crafting a Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) update that will extend several telehealth reimbursement changes as far as the end of 2023. Further, the proposed update includes a provision to study the viability of making the changes permanent if accepted.
- Current proposed changes to the physician fee schedule propose more than dollar reduction in the conversion factor.
Best Provider Practices for Telehealth Visits

- Establish a clean and professional-looking office space
- Reliable Internet
- Camera positioned at eye level
- Try to maintain a positive attitude
- Ensure patient is in a private setting
- Establish an alternative way to connect if service is disrupted (e.g., phone)
Services and Supports
Who We Are

- Metropolitan Human Services District is one of ten Local Governing Entities (LGE’s) created in 2003 by the Louisiana Legislature for the provision of local services Orleans, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes.

- Our staff comprises the largest compliment of licensed and certified behavioral health and IDD professionals and contractors in the geographic area.

Single Point of Entry via the MHSD Care Center at (504) 568-3130
Who We Serve

✓ Adults, children and families in Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes.
✓ Medicaid, Medicare and uninsured populations with mental illness and addiction disorders. No one is denied access to services due to inability to pay.
✓ Individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Eligibility to receive supports and services is determined by State criteria and services and supports are not based on income or insurance status.
✓ We serve persons in crisis via our Metro Crisis Response Team and Behavioral Health Emergency Response Team
6 Community-Based Locations

Algiers Behavioral Health Center (District Office)
3100 General De Gaulle Drive
New Orleans, LA 70114

Central City Behavioral Health & Access Center
2221 Philip Street
New Orleans, LA 70113

Chartres-Pontchartrain Behavioral Health Center
719 Elysian Fields Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70117

New Orleans East Behavioral Health Center
5630 Read Boulevard (2nd Floor)
New Orleans, LA 70127

St. Bernard Behavioral Health Center
6624 St Claude Ave
Arabi, LA 70032

Plaquemines Community C.A.R.E. Center (MHSD Contractor)
115 Keating Drive
Belle Chasse, LA 70337
MHSD Services - Ages 0-65

1. MI, SUD and IDD services
2. SUD Prevention Services
3. Crisis Response Services (MCRT, BHERT)
Mental Health Crisis vs Emergency?
Wednesday, March 23, 2022

Ashe Power House Theatre
1731 Baronne Street
New Orleans, LA 70113
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Learn how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance abuse disorders.

Mental Health First Aid Training

DOING MENTAL HEALTH DIFFERENTLY
10 Tips to Guard Your Mental Health!!

- Remember to BREATHE
- Open up to someone
- Don’t avoid asking for help
- Balance how you spend your time and with whom
- Find the answers for your kids’ questions
- Hold on to the belief in something bigger than yourself.
- Be a Blessing to Someone else/Help somebody
- Enjoy an occasional indulgence
- Eat Well! Move more! Sleep enough!
- Choose Joy!

www.mhsdla.org | 504.568.3130  MHSD  Where We Change Lives!