Mental Health and Vulnerable Populations

Wisconsin Center for Nursing

Mary V. Muse, MS, RN, CCHP-A, CCHP-RN
Chief Nursing Officer-Director of Nursing
Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Objectives

• Overview of the state of mental health among vulnerable populations.
• Barriers to mental health services in Corrections and the community
• Need for advocacy
• Opportunities for intervention by nurses, nurse leaders, and the community

Vulnerable Populations

• “An overwhelming number of people living in poverty, poor health and experiencing human rights violations have mental health needs”

Vulnerable Populations

• Youth, including youth in foster care
• Aging and Elderly
• Minority (specifically Black males, Hispanic males
• Homeless
• Veterans
• Pregnant Women
• LGBT
• Underserved and marginalized populations

Mental Health in Wisconsin

• 55,000 adolescents between 12-17 years of age suffer from depression.
Mental Health a Chronic Disease

- Respiratory
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Depression
- Bipolar disorders
- Anxiety
- Suicide
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The Mental Health Picture

Prisoners' mental health issues

- Depressive Disorder 21%
- Manic-Depression, Bipolar Disorder, Mania 12%
- Schizophrenia or Another Psychotic Disorder 5%
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder 7%
- Another Anxiety Disorder 8%
- Personality Disorder 6%

Source: US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics 2007

Increased vulnerability
- Stigma and discrimination
- Violence and abuse
- Restrictions in exercising civil and political rights
- Exclusion from participating fully in society
- Reduced access to health and social services
- Reduced access to emergency relief services
- Lack of educational opportunities
- Exclusion from income generation and employment opportunities
- Increased disability and premature death

Worsened mental health
- Sadness, hopelessness
- Insomnia, suicide
- Pain about the future
- Social withdrawal and interpersonal problems
- Sleep and eating problems
- Difficulty concentrating and problem solving

Mental Health Conditions

Reduced Development
- Poverty for affected individuals and families
- Inequality between different population groups
- Reduced social capital
- Hindered economic development at societal level
Barriers

- Access to adequate health care
- Social determinants
- Beliefs
- Stigma’s
- Fragmented systems of delivery

RESIDENTS & GUESTS WITH DISABILITIES SERVED BY PORCHLIGHT IN 2013

Advocacy and Policy

- Community Engagement
- Increased Services
- Public Health
- Legislation

Mental Health: A State of Wellness

Opportunities for Intervention

- Nurse
- Nurse Leaders
- Community
Mental Health and Vulnerable Populations

Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, "What are you doing for others?"
~ Martin Luther King, Jr.

Wellness
He who is not courageous enough in life to take risk will accomplish nothing in life.

Martin Luther King

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."
~ Martin Luther King Jr.

@JamiePelayo