



Vulnerable and Hard-to-Reach Population FACT SHEET: Mental Illness and Substance Abuse

This fact sheet provides information about a population in Florida that is potentially vulnerable and/or hard-to-reach before, during, and after a disaster event. Preparedness requires understanding the demographics and characteristics of these groups in order to best meet the needs of all persons.

Overview of Mental Illness

Mental health includes:

- Emotions
- Coping skills
- Life management and interpersonal skills
- Thoughts
- Social support
- Cognitive abilities, including decision-making and judgment

Major classes of mental illness are defined by prominent symptoms, including:

- Mood disorders such as depression and mania
- Anxiety disorders such as post-traumatic stress disorder, phobia, and panic disorder
- Impulse control disorders such as intermittent explosive disorder and trichotillomania
- Substance abuse disorders such as alcoholism, prescription drug abuse, and cocaine addiction
- Psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia and delusional disorder

Demographics

- Nearly 50% of all Americans will experience an anxiety, mood, substance, and/or impulse control disorder at some point in their lifetime.
 - 25% of Americans will experience at least one of these disorders within a 12-month timeframe
 - 50% of the time, these disorders start in adolescence
 - 75% of all lifetime cases start by early adulthood

General Information

Depressive Disorders

- Prevalent disorder affecting 12% of Americans annually – that's 20 million people!
- Under-treated and under-diagnosed
- There is a 20% lifetime risk for developing at least one major depression episode.
- Women are twice as likely to suffer from depression.
- Symptoms include:
 - Depressed or 'flat' mood
 - Loss of interest in activities
 - Sleep and eating disturbances
 - Fatigue or low energy
 - Lack of motivation
 - Low self-esteem
 - Thoughts of death (suicide)
 - Trouble concentrating

Bipolar Disorder (Manic Depression)

- Symptoms include:
 - Elevated mood
 - Impulsive behavior
 - Poor decision-making
- Treatment usually relies on mood stabilizing medication.

Anxiety Disorders

- May be intrinsic or related to substance use, alcohol, or medical conditions.
- Some types of anxiety disorders:
 - Panic attacks
 - Phobia(s)
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Psychotic Disorders

- Schizophrenia
- Delusional disorder
- Psychotic disorder due to a medical condition
- Substance-induced psychotic disorder

Overview of Substance Abuse

Definitions

- Substance abuse: the use of any substance(s) for non-therapeutic purposes or use of medication for purposes other than those for which it is prescribed
- Addiction: the continued use of a specific psychoactive substance despite physical, psychological, or social harm
- Misuse: the underuse, overuse, or erratic use of substances
- Substance dependence may be:
 - Physiological: evidence of physical tolerance or withdrawal symptoms
 - Psychological: a pattern of compulsive use with no evidence of physiological dependence

Demographics

- Floridians affected by substance abuse (Substance Abuse Program Office, FL Dept. of Children and Families):
 - 343,727 children under the age of 18 years
 - 1,157,483 adults 18 years and older

For More Information

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