



## OVERVIEW

### BIG IDEA

Rural communities often face barriers to mental health care.

### OBJECTIVE

**6.7:** Determine when professional mental health services are required.

### AGENDA

1. Mental Health Professionals
2. What is Mental Illness?
3. Mental Health in Rural Settings
4. Seeking Mental Health Care
5. Mental Illness Facts & Numbers
6. Mock Hotline Call Skits

### HOMEWORK

Transform your mental health hotline script into a skit to perform for class, or record an audio or video performance of it to play in class.

## LESSON 6.7

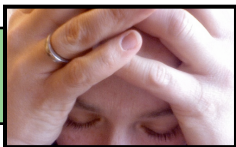
# Mental Health

### SUMMARY:

Students will explore mental health from a rural health perspective by considering the possible members of a mental health care team, identifying the prevalence, impact, and barrier to access for mental health in rural settings, and reading about strategies for seeking mental health care. Students will demonstrate their understanding of mental health concepts by creating a mock hotline call portraying a teenager who is struggling with a potential mental health issue.

### STANDARDS:

**NHES 3.12.4:** Determine when professional health services may be required.



# Intro to Rural Health

Obj. 5.7: Determine when professional mental health services are required.



## Who are Mental Health Professionals?

Review the table listing various mental health professionals. Then answer the questions below.

Occupation	Degree	Prescription Privileges	Average Income (\$US)
Psychiatrist	MD/DO	Yes	\$200,000
Clinical Psychologist	PhD/PsyD	No	\$85,000
School Psychologist	PhD/EdD/PsyD or MA/MS	No	\$78,000
Counselor/Psychotherapist	PhD/EdD/PsyD or MA/MS	No	\$49,000 - \$75,000
Clinical or Psychiatric Social Worker	MSW/DSW/PhD	No	\$46,170 - \$50,700
Occupational Therapist	MOT, MSOT, OTD, ScD, PhD	No	\$69,630
Psychiatric and Mental Health Nurse Practitioner	MSN/DNP/PhD	Yes	\$80,711
Physician Assistant (PA)	MPAS/MHS/MMS/DScPA	Yes	\$80,356
Expressive/Art Therapist	MA	No	\$45,000

Source: Wikipedia (Mental Health Professional)

1. A psychiatrist is a medical doctor who evaluates, diagnoses and treats mental illness. If you were to become a psychiatrist, what might you like and dislike about the career?
2. An occupational therapist may work with those who have mental health problems by choosing activities to help them learn to engage and cope with daily life. What types of activities might these include?
3. Which mental health professionals may have the ability to prescribe medicines?
4. Of these mental health careers, which interests you most? Why?



What are the **benefits** and **challenges** of having such a wide variety of professionals who may support a person with mental health needs?

### DO NOW:

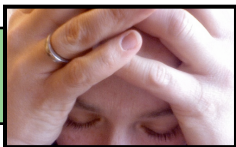
---The purpose of the Do Now is to expose students to possible career paths in the mental health arena. There is a shortage of mental health professionals, especially in rural communities, so getting students engaged in considering these careers is important. Some high schoolers have a natural inclination toward majoring in psychology (even if they don't completely understand what this entails); this list may open their eyes to other similar possibilities.

---Answers will vary. Provide students who are interested in these health care career tracks to share with the class what makes them interested or passionate about them.

### DISCUSS:

**Possible benefits:** various providers play different roles so the spectrum of needs are met for individuals mental health issues; different perspectives can offer balance and insight into aspects of mental health; "it takes a village" concept—the more support, the better!

**Possible challenges:** coordinating care may be difficult across a team with members each in different settings; ability to ensure patients who require medications have access may be difficult if the roles that can prescribe medicines are limited in number, lack of communication may cause confusion and lack of consistency in approach with patient.



NEW  
INFO

### What is Mental Illness?

A mental illness is a medical condition that disrupts a person's thinking, feeling, mood, ability to relate to others and daily functioning. Just as diabetes is a disorder of the pancreas, mental illnesses are medical conditions that often result in a diminished capacity for coping with the ordinary demands of life.

Serious mental illnesses include major depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and borderline personality disorder. The good news about mental illness is that recovery is possible.

Mental illnesses can affect persons of any age, race, religion or income. Mental illnesses are not the result of personal weakness, lack of character or poor upbringing. Mental illnesses are treatable. Most people diagnosed with a serious mental illness can experience relief from their symptoms by actively participating in an individual treatment plan.

Source: [http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By\\_Illness](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By_Illness)



READ

### Mental Health in Rural Settings

People in rural areas often experience problems with access to behavioral health services for both mental health disorders and substance abuse and a combination of both as in co-occurring disorders. There are an inadequate number of providers in rural areas and **stigma** regarding obtaining behavioral health treatment continues to exist. Both of these factors often prevent people from accessing needed behavioral health services.

Integrating primary care and behavioral health increases access to behavioral health care for people in rural areas. When behavioral health services are provided in the same health care setting as primary care services, people are more likely to take advantage of the behavioral health services. Resources should be provided to encourage integrated care and to increase the number of behavioral health providers practicing in primary care settings.

- Crisis intervention, diagnosis, primary outpatient treatment (including medication management), prevention, and referral, including services for adults, children, adolescents and families<sup>36</sup>
- Referral mechanisms to specialists and inpatient mental health services in other communities with referrals back to local community outpatient providers<sup>37</sup>

Source: "The Future of Rural Health." National Rural Health Association Policy Brief. Feb. 2013.

DISCUSS

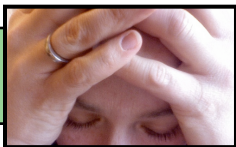
1. What is **stigma**? Which mental illnesses do you think carry the most stigma?
2. In addition to stigma, for what other reasons might people avoid mental health care?
3. Why might rural communities have higher rates of mental illness?

**NEW INFO:** Ask students what other mental health issues they know about.

**NEW INFO:** Ask students what mental health professional resources they know of that exist in their community. Encourage them to think broadly—school, church, health care settings, social work agencies, etc.

### DISCUSS:

Question #2: Possible reasons may include denial, disbelief, being stubborn or too "proud" to receive care, fear, lack of knowledge of resources, lack of resources available, lack of time, no money to pay fees, insurance does not cover services or person does not believe insurance will cover it, etc.



**Seeking Mental Health Care**

Read the reference article "Seeking Mental Health Care: Taking the First, Scary Step," by Roxanne Porter for Psych Central. In the table below, briefly explain each strategy discussed in the article.

Strategy for Seeking Mental Health Care	Explanation
Figure out why you are reluctant	
Use anonymous help lines	
Stop using pejorative language	
Ask around	
Talk it out	
Ask for company	
Keep a journal	
Consider support groups	
Consider what to expect	
Set limits	



**Mental Illness Facts and Numbers**

Review the handout, "Mental Illness Facts and Numbers." Among the statistics presented, is the following:

*"One-half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14; three-quarters by age 24.15 Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help."*

What can be done to get people help sooner? Brainstorm some ideas with a partner.

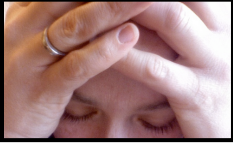
**READ:**

**Source:** See PDF in resources folder.

"Seeking Mental Health Care: Taking the First, Scary Step," by Roxanne Porter for Psych Central. : <http://psychcentral.com/lib/seeking-mental-health-care-taking-the-first-scary-step/00013701>

More information can be found at: <http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/guide/mental-health-tests-you-take>

**DISCUSS:** Encourage students to think creatively. Consider offering butcher paper or an opportunity to record a comprehensive list of their ideas on the board.



**Mock Hotline Call:** Mental Health Support for Rural Teens

**Challenge:** You have created a mental health hotline specifically for a target population of rural teenagers. With a partner, create a realistic fictional call into the hotline from a teen who might be struggling with a mental health illness. Be sure the mental health counselor on the hotline call includes at least two of the strategies for seeking mental health care in the advice given to the teen. Remember, their purpose is not to diagnose the teenager’s mental health illness over the phone, but rather to listen, to ensure they are safe, and to provide support, encouragement, and resources for seeking professional mental health care.

**Possible Mental Health Illnesses:** Remember, these illnesses will not be diagnosed specifically, but choosing one (or more) will help you frame the symptoms or feelings that the teenager may be calling about.

- Anxiety Disorders
- Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD)
- Bipolar Disorder
- Borderline Personality Disorder
- Depression
- Dissociative Disorders
- Eating Disorders or Substance Abuse
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Panic Disorder
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Schizoaffective Disorder or Schizophrenia
- Seasonal Affective Disorder

Before writing your script on a separate paper, plan out the scenario using this table:

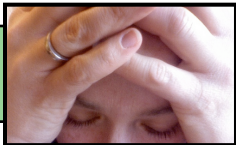
Question	Details
Who is the caller? What is their gender, age, and other characteristics?	
What mental illness or specific symptoms/problems is the person calling about?	
What prompted the call? Was there an event or incident?	
How does the caller feel about mental health services? Is he/she resistant? Does she lack access or knowledge?	
What strategies for seeking mental health care will the counselor use? What will be the outcome of the call?	

**THINK:** Consider sharing copies of the “Sample Suicide Intervention Script” (PDF available in lesson resources) as an example for students. Alternatively, giving students a chance to do some mini-role playing with brief exchanges may help. For example, call on a student to explain how they would respond if someone called a hotline and said, “I am thinking about hurting myself.” or “I just can’t stop feeling sad. I can’t even get out of bed.”

Excellent information on these illnesses can be found at the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) website, at: [http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By\\_Illness](http://www.nami.org/Template.cfm?Section=By_Illness). Students should research the mental illness they choose for their scenario.

*What to do in emergency?* Get IMMEDIATE HELP! (Info here: <http://www.mentalhealth.gov/get-help/immediate-help/index.html>)

*What is this job?* Crisis line counselors provide counseling and emotional support to people who are abused, depressed, grieving, suicidal, homeless, or mentally ill. Some volunteers have mental health backgrounds, but many don’t. ([http://www.crisissupport.org/crisis\\_line](http://www.crisissupport.org/crisis_line))



### Assessing Mental Health Care

1. Explain why the teenager in your hotline scenario should seek mental health care?
2. What were the barriers for seeking mental health care that the teen faced?
3. What specific strategies or resources did the mental health counselor on the hotline offer to help?



### Hotline Skits

For your homework, you will prepare to present your hotline scenario to the class. You will enact your hotline call script in a live skit or record the audio or video. One partner should act as the mental health counselor and the other should be the teenager who is calling in. Make an action plan with your partner so that you are prepared to do this:

**Action Plan:**

**HOMEWORK:** This homework assignment will prepare students to share their skits with the class. If more time is needed for preparation, an extension to a future class can be given.