

Mental Health

Obj. 6.7: 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?

DISCUSS

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



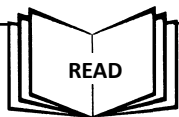
What is Mental Illness?

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



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.

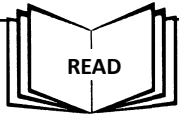
Integrating primary care and behavioral health increases access to behavioral health care for people in rural areas. When behavioral health services are provided in the same health care setting as primary care services, people are more likely to take advantage of the behavioral health services. Resources 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 families³⁶
- Referral mechanisms to specialists and inpatient mental health services in other communities with referrals back to local community outpatient providers³⁷

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?



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	

DISCUSS

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.



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?	



Accessing 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: