

Older Adults & Mental Health

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Demographics

- Fastest Growing Population
 - Growing 3x faster than any other age group
 - People over 50 = 25% of today's population
 - People at age 65 = 34 million in 1995
 - By 2025 = 62 million
 - 65 today? You'll likely live another 18 years!
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ of today's older adult population is over 75
 - New Categories!
 - Young-old: 65-75
 - Old: 75-85
 - Old-Old 85+

Causes for Mental Illness

- Challenges of Aging
 - Older Adults Face More Stressors than teens!
 - Multiple and continuous losses & change
 - Physical illness
 - Ageism
 - American Culture, Professionals, individuals
 - Add it up
- Increased incidents of mental illness
 - 18 – 25% have mental health care needs

Mental Illness & Aging

- Highest suicide rate across all ages!
- Three Most Common Mental Illnesses
 - Major Depression
 - Anxiety
 - Dementias

Mental Illness & Aging (Cont'd)

- Depression
 - #1 Mental Illness in Older Adults
 - > 60% have had or are currently struggling
 - Quite often fatal!
- Anxiety
 - 2nd due to so many types and quite often associated with depression and dementias

Mental Illness & Aging (cont'd)

- Dementia
 - 5% > 65
 - By Age 80? 15-25%
 - So many types
 - Likely to increase by 27% by 2020, 70% by 2030 and nearly 300% by 2050! (and that's just Alzheimer's)
 - A substantial increase over earlier predictions from a 1990 study

Current Challenges

- So many barriers to overcome
 - Older Adult Culture
 - Ageism
 - Systematic barrier
 - Medicaid only
 - Medicare's discriminatory policies
 - Lack of coordination/collaboration with MHD/ADSA
 - Inconsistent MH coverage across the RSN's
 - Getting into the system!

Current Challenges (cont'd)

- Obtaining mental health services
 - Must admit they have a problem
 - Must have Medicaid
 - Must have an assessment
 - Must be primarily ambulatory and in pretty good health
 - Have own transportation and can come in
 - Meet access to care criteria

Current Challenges (cont'd)

- Who's not getting services
 - Those without Medicaid
 - “Fragile” Medicaid Status
 - Recent/acute losses
 - Non ambulatory
 - Severely ill
 - Substance abusers

Challenges (cont'd)

- Today there are less older adults being seen in the MH system
 - Since a high on 2001 we have steadily declined in numbers served
 - 7% make up inpatient services
 - 6% community based services
- Some older adult programs have been “integrated” into the adult programs
- Many rural areas have no specialists

What's Needed

- Parity
- Active Case-finding
- Specialized Crisis or Early Prevention programs
- Ensure GMHS are involved in all types of services
- Expand ECS
- Fully recognize dementias in the MH world

What's Needed

- Improved rural services
- Full time position within the MHD dedicated to aging.
- Collaborate/Integrate better with ADSA