

Substance Use and Mental Health in Reintegration Programs

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Prevalence

- Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.—43.8 million, or 18.5%—experiences mental illness in a given year.¹
- Approximately 1 in 25 adults in the U.S.—9.8 million, or 4.0%—experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.²
- Among the 20.2 million adults in the U.S. who experienced a substance use disorder, 50.5%—10.2 million adults—had a co-occurring mental illness.⁸

Substance Use and Mental Illness

- According to SAMHSA, 26.7% of people with mental health issues abused illicit drugs in 2012. In the general public, only 13.2% of people abused drugs.
- Those who suffer from mental illness may attempt to **self-medicate their symptoms via drug use**. When these individuals abuse drugs, they may feel less anxiety, depression, or neuroses, albeit temporarily. When the individual is not high, **the symptoms of their mental health issue return – oftentimes stronger than they were before.**

Social Statistics

- An estimated 26% of homeless adults staying in shelters live with serious mental illness and an estimated 46% live with severe mental illness and/or substance use disorders.⁹
- Approximately 20% of state prisoners and 21% of local jail prisoners have “a recent history” of a mental health condition.¹⁰
- 70% of youth in juvenile justice systems have at least one mental health condition and at least 20% live with a serious mental illness.¹¹

Link between Substance abuse and Mental Illness

- **Certain mental conditions are most likely to use abuse substances:**
 - Antisocial personality disorders have a 15.5% abuse rate.
 - Bipolar disorder is next at 14.5%.
 - Anxiety disorders have a 4.3% abuse rate.
- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs indicates that more than **2 out of 10 veterans** who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) concurrently have a substance abuse disorder.

Mental Illness

- **Mood Disorders**
 - Major Depressive Disorder most commonly diagnosed
 - Can present with or without anxiety
 - Not just ‘having a bad day’
 - How it typically presents in the program
 - How it is treated

Mental Illness

- **Bipolar Disorder**
 - Frequently diagnosed and medicated in prison population
 - Mood swings are often interpreted as bipolar
 - What a manic episode looks like (*not just 'not depressed' or 'in a good mood'*)
 - How it typically presents in the program
 - How it is treated

Mental Illness

- **Psychotic Disorders**
 - Schizophrenia most commonly diagnosed
 - Frequently diagnosed in prison population solely based on the comment 'I hear voices' (*but voices can be caused by other things, drugs etc, explained more later*)
 - What a typical case looks like (*positive symptoms*)
 - Delusions
 - Hallucinations
 - Disorganized behavior/speech
 - How it typically presents in the program
 - How it is treated

Mental Illness

- **Personality Disorders**
 - How they differ from all the other disorders
 - Narcissistic & Antisocial common in our population
 - How it typically presents in the program
 - How it is treated

Substance Use & Mental Illness

- **Drugs can look like mental illness** (*apart from causing/exacerbating it*)
- **For all drugs, come down can look like a depressive disorder**
 - Opiates or marijuana can also if client is just seen briefly but frequently due to physical effects
- **Amphetamines can look like bipolar (mania and come down)**
 - Sometimes amphetamines can look like schizophrenia
- **LSD, PCP, 'sherm' can look like schizophrenia**
 - Possibly marijuana depending on kind/cut

Substance Use & Mental Illness

- **Chicken or Egg**
- **Do drugs cause mental illness or does mental illness lead to drug use**
 - No straight answer
- **How mental illness leads to drug use**
 - Primarily symptom management
- **How drug use leads to mental illness**
 - Latent illness triggered
 - Permanent brain damage
 - Beliefs held about the world for too long

Treatment Statistics

- **Only 41% of adults in the U.S. with a mental health condition received mental health services in the past year. Among adults with a serious mental illness, 62.9% received mental health services in the past year.**⁸
- **African Americans and Hispanic Americans used mental health services at about one-half the rate of Caucasian Americans in the past year and Asian Americans at about one-third the rate.**¹³
- **Half of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14; three-quarters by age 24. Despite effective treatment, there are long delays—sometimes decades—between the first appearance of symptoms and when people get help.**¹⁴

Treatment for Mood Disorders

- **Medication**
 - Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors & Serotonin Noepinephrine Antidepressants
 - ✦ Treat depression and associated symptoms of sadness, fatigue, hopelessness, sleeplessness, anhedonia, loss of appetite, loss of concentration, suicide, or self-harm thinking
 - Mood Stabilizers
 - ✦ Treat mood swings, excitability, irritability, anxiety, impulsivity, euphoria, depression, pressured speech, poor judgment, anger, sleeplessness, excessive energy, racing thoughts
- **What symptoms cannot be cured or managed**
- **Abuse potential**
- **Prevalence in prisons and programs**
- **Barriers to treatment**

Treatment for Bipolar Disorder

- **Medication**
 - Atypical antipsychotics to treat mixed or manic episodes
- **What symptoms cannot be cured or managed**
- **Abuse potential**
- **Prevalence in prisons and programs**
- **Barriers to treatment**

Treatment for Psychotic Disorders

- **Medication**
 - Atypical Antipsychotics & Typical Antipsychotics
 - ✦ Treat symptoms including auditory and visual hallucinations, delusions, and paranoia.
- **What symptoms cannot be cured or managed**
- **Abuse potential**
- **Prevalence in prisons and programs**
- **Barriers to treatment**
