NCADD
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON ALCOHOLISM AND DRUG DEPENDENCE, INC.

43.7 Million Americans experienced mental illness in 2012

Nearly one in five American adults, or 43.7 million people, experienced a diagnosable mental illness in 2012 according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

These results are consistent with 2011 findings.

SAMHSA also reported that, consistent with 2011, less than half (41 percent) of these adults received any mental health services in the past year. Among those who had serious mental illness, 62.9 percent received treatment.

Among adults with mental illness who reported an unmet need for treatment, the top three reasons given for not receiving help were that they could not afford the cost, thought they could handle the problem without treatment, or did not know where to go for services.

The findings also shed light on mental health issues among young people. According to the report, 2.2 million youth aged 12 to 17 (9.1 percent of this population) experienced a major depressive episode in 2012. These young people were more than three times as likely to have a substance use disorder (16.0 percent) than their counterparts who had not experienced a major depressive episode (5.1 percent).

The Administration recently launched MentalHealth.gov to help people find easy-to-understand information about basic signs of mental health problems, how to talk about mental health and mental illness, and how to locate help.

The new findings from SAMHSA also found that 9 million American adults 18 and older (3.9 percent) had serious thoughts of suicide in the past year--2.7 million (1.1 percent) made suicide plans and 1.3 million (0.6 percent) attempted suicide.

Those in crisis or knowing someone they believe may be at immediate risk of attempting suicide can call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or click here.

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline network, funded by SAMHSA, provides immediate free and confidential crisis round-the-clock counseling to anyone in need throughout the country, every day of the year.

According to SAMHSA, adults who experienced mental illness in the past year were three times more likely to have met the criteria for a substance use disorder than those who had not experienced mental illness in the past year (19.2 percent versus 6.4 percent). Those who had serious mental illness in the past year were even more likely to have had substance dependence or abuse (27.3 percent).

The new findings come from SAMHSA's 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health. In the survey, mental illness among adults aged 18 or older is defined as having had a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder (excluding developmental and substance use disorders) in the past year based on criteria specified in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association.

In this survey, serious mental illness is defined as mental illness that resulted in serious functional impairment, which substantially interfered with or limited one or more major life activities. A major depressive episode is defined as a period of at least two weeks when a person experienced a depressed mood or loss of interest or pleasure in daily activities and had at least four of seven additional symptoms reflecting the criteria as described in the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

The complete survey findings from this report are available on the SAMHSA Web site.