American Indian/Alaska Native Mental Health Disparities

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AI/AN Mental Health Issues

• The asterisks (*) of studies (to few to report)
• Office of Minority Health (OMH) reports AI/AN have higher rates than all races of:
  • Serious psychological distress
  • Feelings of sadness, hopelessness, & worthlessness
  • Feelings of nervousness or restlessness
  • Suicide
• AI/AN overrepresented among populations in high-need of MH services:
  • Homeless
  • Incarcerated
  • Substance abusers
  • Exposed to trauma
  • Children in foster care

OMH, 2016
AI/AN Mental Health Disparities

Alcohol Abuse:
• 39.4% AI/AN 26-49 years binge drink in the past month (national rate is 28.9%)
• Risk factors: unemployed or living in poverty
• AI/AN 5x as likely to die of alcohol related disease

Drug Abuse:
• 21.1% >11 years illicit drug use disorder in past year
• 20% need treatment; Only 12% who need it receive treatment
• Methamphetamine threatens to dwarf alcohol problems

IHS, 2011
AI/AN Mental Health Disparities

Mental Health Status AI/AN adults compared with Non-Hispanic whites:

- Serious psychological distress 1.7 X higher
- Sadness 1.8 X higher
- Hopelessness 1.5 X higher
- Worthlessness 1.6 X higher
- Everything is an effort 1.2 X higher
- Nervous, all/most of time 1.6 X higher
- Restlessness, all/most of time 1.5 X higher

OMH, 2016
Violence in Indian Country

• Violent deaths from unintentional injuries, homicide, suicide account for 75% of all mortality for AI/AN in their 20s

• Bullying 27.5% AI/AN grades 6-12
  • 20.1% national all races

• AI/AN are 2.5 times as likely to experience violent crimes

• AI/AN are at least 2 times more likely to experience rape or sexual assault crimes compared to all other races

• 61% of AI/AN women have been assaulted in their lifetimes 34% of AI/AN women will be raped in their lifetimes

Gray & Anderson, 2014
Violence in Indian Country

- 39% of AI/AN women will be subjected to violence by an intimate partner in their lifetimes;
- 17% AI/AN women reported being stalked during their lifetimes;
- Among AI/AN women victims of rape or sexual assault, an average of 67% describe the offender as non-Native;
- Among Native women victims of assault, an average of 63% describe the offender as non-Native;
- 46% of people living on reservations in 2010 were non-Native.

Gray & Anderson, 2014
Several distinct forms of trauma have been identified in Indian Country:

- Cultural Trauma
- Historical Trauma
- Intergenerational Trauma
- Current Trauma
Effects of MH Problems

- 90% of AI/AN suicide completers have MH Dx
- Suicide is 2nd leading cause of death
- Suicide contagion in communities push rates higher
- Cultural stigma against talking about death
- Shortage of behavioral health providers
- Turn over of BH staff working in isolation
- Lack of AI/AN providers

IHS, 2011
Culturally Based Training

- Trauma Focused – Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
  - Project Making Medicine – OUHSC
- Wellbriety Training
  - White Bison
- AI/AN Addictions Technology Transfer Center
  - University of Iowa
- Equine Assisted Therapy
  - Rosebud Sioux Tribe – Horse Program
- Healing of the Canoe –
  - Northwestern Costal tribes

Gray, 2016
References


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