

# Fact Sheet: MH

## Who Are We?

Lancaster County Office of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (BH/DS) is the tax-funded agency mandated by state and federal law to provide services to persons with mental illness or intellectual and developmental disabilities. Early Intervention provides services to children up to age 3 with developmental delays.

BH/DS was established in 1966 and is regulated by the following state offices: Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Office of Developmental Programs, and the Office of Child Development and Early Learning under the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

The agency is funded by state, federal and county dollars. Some of our services, such as supports coordination, cost nothing. Some services require a co-payment based on income. Early Intervention is an entitlement and families are not required to pay for those services.

## Support Groups

You may find valuable assistance through a support group. Groups exist for various types of mental illness, as well as for family members of persons with a mental illness.

For information on support groups, call Mental Health America in Lancaster, 717-397-7461.

## Mental Illness:

### Some Facts

- ◆ Mental illnesses are biologically based brain disorders. They cannot be overcome through “will power” and are not related to a person’s “character” or intelligence.
- ◆ Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experience mental illness in a given year.
- ◆ Approximately 1 in 20 adults in the U.S.— 14.1 million, or 5% —experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.
- ◆ Approximately 1 in 6 youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year (2021).
- ◆ Between .25 and .64% of U.S. adults live with schizophrenia.
- ◆ 2.8% of adults in the U.S. live with bipolar disorder.
- ◆ Suicide is the 12th leading cause of death in the U.S. (2021), the 3rd leading cause of death for people aged 15 to 24, and the 2nd leading cause of death for people aged 10 to 14.
- ◆ Only 47.2% of adults in the U.S. with a mental health condition received mental health services in the past year (2021). Among adults with a serious mental illness, 65.4% received mental health services in the past year (2021).
- ◆ With appropriate effective medication and a wide range of services tailored to their needs, most people who live with serious mental illnesses can significantly reduce the impact of their illness and find a satisfying measure of achievement and independence.
- ◆ Innovations in the range of evidence based medications, therapy and psychosocial services such as psychiatric rehabilitation, housing, employment and peer supports have made wellness and recovery a reality for people living with mental health conditions.

Most health insurance policies only provide limited mental health coverage, if at all. Without treatment, the consequences of mental illness for the individual and society are staggering: unnecessary disability, unemployment, substance abuse, homelessness, inappropriate incarceration, suicide and wasted time. The economic cost of untreated mental illness is 190 billion dollars each year in the United States.

### References:

*The National Institute of Mental Health, [www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)*  
*National Alliance on Mental Illness, [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)*

## How to Get Help

Persons experiencing anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, or another variety of mental health crisis can receive immediate assistance from the Lancaster County Crisis Intervention staff.

Crisis Intervention can assist in assessing what a person needs to alleviate the immediate crisis and then link them to appropriate services. This can be completed by an outreach to the person’s location, a phone call, or meeting in the office.

Crisis Intervention also has the authority to arrange involuntary commitments to an inpatient mental health unit.

Do not put off obtaining help, particularly in the case of thoughts or threats of suicide or harm to others. In such emergency situations, call Crisis Intervention at 717-394-2631.

## Recovery

Recovery in Mental Health is a highly individualized process by which people are able to live, work, learn, and participate fully in their communities.

Recovery is supported by the power of individual choice. A recovery-oriented system helps people understand an illness or disorder and provides the support people need to take back control of their life.

Recovery is a vision of hope that includes no limits.

# Mental Health

## Getting Help

If you or someone you know needs help coping with a mental illness, there is help available - talk to your family doctor, employee assistance program, school counselor or religious leader. They can refer you to a competent therapist, psychologist or psychiatrist with whom you can talk or from whom you can obtain appropriate support and/or services.

If such resources are not available to you, or if you do not have health insurance that covers treatment for mental illness, contact the BH Intake Unit at 717-393-0421.

An intake interview can be arranged to determine needs and financial liability. (Financial liability determines how much, if anything, you can afford to contribute to cost of services).

## Common Mental Health Diagnoses

### Major Depression

Many people confuse depression with "feeling blue." Those "feeling blue" times are very common and very normal. What is not normal is for these feelings to persist and intensify.

Depression is serious when it interferes with your life: when you can't get out of bed in the morning; when you look for ways to escape the pain of life (sleep, alcohol, drugs, transient relationships); when you feel life is pointless and empty.

Other symptoms of major depression include insomnia, lack of pleasure in previously enjoyable activities, loss of sexual drive, withdrawal, fatigue, increase or decrease in appetite, and apathy.

Some treatment options for depression include Psychotherapy (individual and group), and mood stabilizing medications.

### Bipolar Disorder

Individuals with bipolar disorder experience expansive mood swings. These swings range from mania to depression. Mania is intense enthusiasm that involves hyperactivity, inability to concentrate, leaping from one idea to the next, or excessive involvement in activities.

Treatments for bipolar disorder include Psychotherapy (individual and group), and mood stabilizing medications.

### Borderline Personality Disorder

Borderline personality disorder (BPD) is a mental illness characterized by pervasive instability in moods, interpersonal relationships, self-image, and behavior. This instability often disrupts family and work life, long-term planning, and the individual's sense of self-identity. People with BPD often have highly unstable patterns of social relationships. While they can develop intense but stormy attachments, their attitudes towards family, friends, and loved ones may suddenly shift from great admiration and love to intense anger and dislike.

Fear of abandonment seems related to difficulties feeling emotionally connected to others when they are physically absent, leaving the individual with BPD feeling lost and worthless. Suicide threats and attempts may occur along with anger at perceived abandonment and disappointments.

Treatment for BPD: Group and individual psychotherapy are effective for many individuals. Medication may be prescribed based on specific symptoms shown by the individual.

### Schizophrenia

Schizophrenia refers to a group of disorders. The illness may be controlled with medication and other supports. Very few persons diagnosed with schizophrenia are violent.

Persons with schizophrenia sometimes hear nonexistent sounds, voices or music, or see nonexistent images. Since their perception of reality is distorted, they may act inappropriately.

The primary symptom of schizophrenia is a distorted thought pattern. Persons with schizophrenia often dart from thought to thought or think they are being watched or plotted against.

As for the cause of schizophrenia, some researchers point to a biochemical imbalance; some researchers say it is a brain disease.

Antipsychotic drugs, therapy, and reduction of stress in work or living arrangements are successful in treating many cases of schizophrenia.

*From the National Institute of Mental Health,  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)*

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**For more information please visit our website at  
[LancasterCountyBHDS.org](http://LancasterCountyBHDS.org)**

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### **For Information Call:**

Administration Unit: 717-299-8021

Crisis Intervention: 717-394-2631

Early Intervention: 717-399-7323

MH Case Management Unit: 717-393-0421

IDD Supports Coordination Unit: 717-399-7355