

A look at healthypeople 2020 health disparities

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Healthy People 2020 Laura Siegel Do you know someone with a mental illness? Do you know someone who has been turned down for employment because of having a mental illness? Do you have a family member or a patient that has a mental illness and has experienced the challenges of trying to find a service that hasn't been reduced or completely cut? The challenges of dealing with mental illness in our country are among the highest of all diseases, and the vast array of mental disorders are one of the most common causes of disability.

According to Healthy People 2020, 1 in 4 adults in the United States had a mental disorder in the past year typically being either depression or anxiety and 1 in 17 had a serious mental illness. * Reading the above statistics was the catalyst for my decision to choose mental illness as my leading health problem for this paper. In addition, I have experienced mental illness in my family and all too aware of many of the challenges that come with having or knowing someone with a mental illness.

Also, working in an Emergency Department setting, patients with mental illness frequently come to the ED in crisis and it seems that much of the time, their crisis due to practical or logistical reason. * As a nurse working in the emergency room, having the tools needed to effectively respond to the needs of patients with mental illness is crucial. These patients often present to the ED because of medication noncompliance or lack of proper information or resources.

As a result, these same patients also present with medical problems, because without appropriate resources or medication, people with mental illness often engage in high risk behaviors that might involve self

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destruction, drug abuse or violence. * Dealing with patients with mental illness can often be challenging, scary and leaving healthcare workers feeling burned out.

It is my belief that if nurses, physicians and ancillary staff are properly educated, resulting in people with mental illness being de-stigmatized, everyone will be better off. Laura Siegel CINAHL