



Tear down barriers tied to treatment

August 9, 2010

Evansville Courier and Press

It is rare to hear a person say, "I've just been diagnosed with cancer, and I'm not going to get treated because I cannot afford it or don't know where to get treated." Or, to hear a person talk about his diabetes, heart condition, high blood pressure or any other debilitating disease and also not hear about the treatment the person is undergoing to rectify the condition.

It is unfortunate that in the case of mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, paranoia and substance abuse, to name a few, that all too often individuals will let these disorders go untreated. According to the 2009 Community Mental Health and Addiction Needs Assessment, the following factors were identified as reasons individuals do not seek treatment:

- The individual is concerned by the stigma attached to seeking help for a mental health or substance abuse disorder.
- The individual believes mental health care is not an option because they believe they cannot afford the cost of services. Ironically, underlying issues that have gone untreated and have continued to compound over the years could end up costing more if he does not seek early intervention.
- The individual might lose his job if he attends appointments during work hours, when studies have shown that employees who do not get help for their mental health issues can cost the company more money in the long run.
- The individual might think he needs to quit school, working, etc. to get appropriate treatment when

outpatient therapy is designed to ensure that an individual is able to continue pursuing his goals while seeking appropriate treatment.

It is not uncommon for our organization to hear from a community member saying he's never heard of us or is unaware of our services. This statement is both good and bad. This individual is fortunate to have never needed to use our services, but, unfortunately, if this person were to need our services or had a friend, family member, neighbor, college roommate or co-worker who needed our help, he likely would not know about our capacity to assist.

Through this weekly article, we hope to increase our community's knowledge about mental health and addiction services available for residents of Gibson, Posey, Vanderburgh and Warrick counties.

If you don't live in one of the counties mentioned, do not fear — there are 26 community mental health centers located across Indiana that serve every county in our state. A full list of these providers can be found at www.iccmhc.org/providers.

It also is important for us to realize that no matter how much information we include in each of these weekly articles, not everyone will overcome the barriers listed above.

To combat this, we'd like to give you, our readers, an opportunity to tell us what mental health or addiction related topics you'd like to see covered in this weekly article.

If you are interested in learning more about a particular topic that has not been addressed, contact us at the number provided below.

We look forward to hearing from you and further educating our community on mental health topics that are important to you.

It is our goal to help our community take the first steps needed to opening up the barriers that surround seeking appropriate mental health treatment.

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