

Week One Discussion: Pediatric and Perinatal Mental Health

Initial Post

Dr. Morgan and Class,

Address the questions below in relation to either children and adolescents or clients in the perinatal period. You may use the resources below or locate another resource that provides advocacy guidance.

Discuss at least two beliefs or other factors that are related to pediatric or perinatal mental healthcare that create barriers to mental health treatment.

Stigma

There are a variety of stigmas including self-stigma, stigma by association, public stigma, and structural stigma (Thornicroft et al., 2022). Patients with mental health conditions may look at themselves and determine that they are not worth much because of the mental health condition, and this is called self-stigma. Unfortunately, those who struggle with self-stigma often have a high rate of self-harm or suicidality (Thornicroft et al., 2022). Family members of patients suffer from stigma by association, which essentially means that the family members are internalizing the stigma because of being related to someone with a mental health condition. Public stigma is very common in the fact that it is the view of the community towards those who have a mental health condition. Structural stigma essentially is how the legal system and other organizational practices discriminate against those with mental health conditions. Each of these stigmas affect children, adolescents, and perinatal patients with mental health conditions.

The biggest factor that creates a barrier for adolescents for mental health treatment is stigma, and the type of stigma with the largest barrier is self-stigma (Lu et al., 2021). Most adolescents with self-stigma often have “why bother trying” attitude which can lead to self-harm or suicidality. Unfortunately, one in seven adolescents have a mental health condition that has an adverse impact on their lives, family, and friends which often leads to being secluded from social events like sports, school and community activities (Thornicroft et al., 2022). Impacting an adolescent’s social status can change how the patient sees the world and themselves.

Another barrier factor related to stigma is the parent of the adolescent. The parent may not provide mental health treatment for the adolescent for fear of the patient being labelled, and most parents that do not provide their children with mental health treatment have also been found to have a low education level (Lu et al., 2021). Considering parents have to sign for their child to receive mental health treatment, it is very important to reduce stigma and educate the parent about mental health conditions.

Finances

Money makes the world go round. Finances such as low-income households and a patient’s insurance status like having Medicaid or being self-pay often cause adolescents not to receive mental health treatment because the parent cannot afford it (Lu et al., 2021). Mental health is not high on the priority list for many people because most people think it is not as important as