

Approaching Mental Health Needs in Rural and Frontier America

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~~Frontier areas make up 20% of the~~
US land mass with 20% of the
population. 55 million Americans
live in rural/frontier areas

They take into consideration
population density, distance from
population centers and services,
travel time, availability of paved
roads and seasonal changes in
access to services.

.Mental health in rural/frontier America:

- a. Mental health is the fourth most often identified rural health priority
- b. Suicide attempts and completions are higher
- c. 75% of communities lack psychiatrists
- d. 95% lack child psychiatrists
- e. Mental health outcomes are generally worse when measured by greater use of inpatient hospitalization and severity of symptoms

.Challenges for mental health care in rural areas include

- h. Accessibility: the presence or absence of services/providers
- i. Availability: whether people can reach the service
- j. Acceptability: attitudes about mental health issues and willingness to seek services

As the single cultural environment,
rural communities are no longer
homogenous. Stigma is a major
barrier for seeking care and staying
in care

aging population, greater levels of
poverty in rural areas and health
professions shortages are
challenges in rural America

.Geographic: Distance to services
and geographic barriers are
challenges

transportation, lack of mental
healthcare infrastructure and
workforce recruitment and
retention are challenges

for children -- are higher. For example, 600 rural counties (23%) are classified as persistent poverty counties. Many farm families must hold down other jobs to support themselves

.Innovations

- k. Evidence-informed practices: implementing evidence-based practices in rural areas is difficult. Core components of urban-designed practices can be adapted for rural areas
- l. Telehealth/Telemedicine is recognized as a major innovation to increase services and improve workforce skills for rural areas
- m. Co-location and integration of physical and mental health services in community settings

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