

Mental Health Crisis - COVID-19 Related and Beyond

Rochelle Head-Dunham, MD, DFAPA, FASAM
Executive Director/Medical Director



Assistant and Associate Professor of Psychiatry
Tulane and LSU Schools of Medicine



LDI
CONFERENCE
2022

The background of the slide features a bokeh effect of out-of-focus lights in shades of blue and yellow. On the right side, there is a digital display showing the number '21450' in a bright blue, pixelated font. A solid blue rectangle is positioned at the bottom right of the slide.

Effects and Stats

Effects of Pandemics

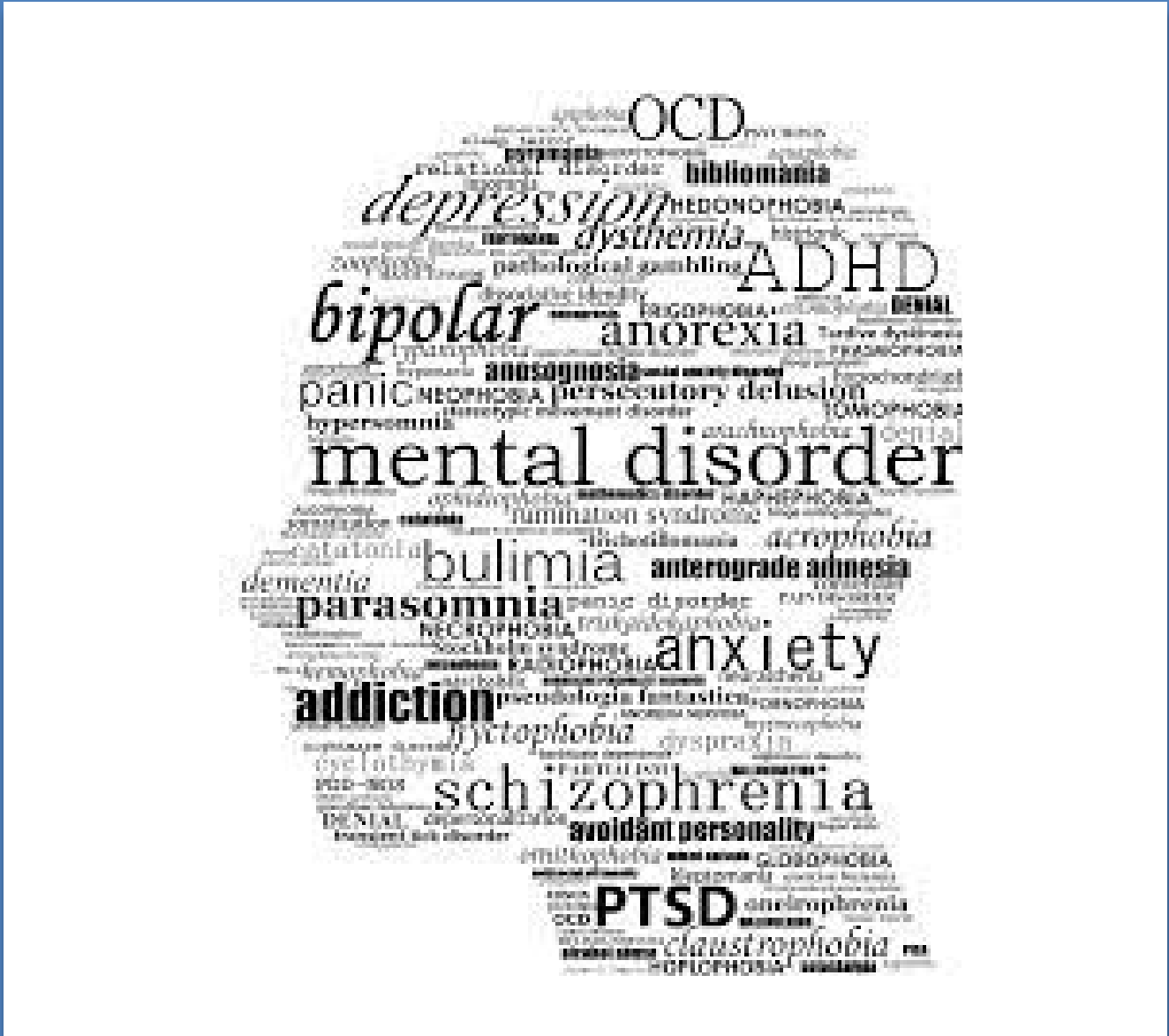
3

Epidemics and pandemics propagate enduring, entrenched
FEAR and Erratic behavior

Impactful effects on Mental Illness can be conceptualized in
several ways

- Impact on Existing Mental Illness
 - Precipitation of new-onset mental symptom
- Debilitation of Caregivers and Caregiving systems

Impact on All Psychiatric Conditions



Pre-COVID Mental Illness and Substance Use Disorders

5

Among those with a substance use disorder:

2 IN 5 (38.5% or 7.4M) struggled with illicit drugs
3 IN 4 (73.1% or 14.1M) struggled with alcohol use
1 IN 9 (11.5% or 2.2M) struggled with illicit drugs and alcohol

Among those with a mental illness:
1 IN 4 (25.5% or 13.1M) had a serious mental illness

7.7%
(19.3 MILLION)
People aged 18
or older had a
substance use
disorder (SUD)

3.8%
(9.5 MILLION)
People 18 or older
had BOTH an SUD
and a mental
illness

20.6%
(51.5 MILLION)
People aged 18
or older had a
mental illness

In 2019, **61.2M** Americans had a mental illness and/or substance use disorder-an increase of 5.9% over 2018 composed entirely of increases in mental illness.

COVID-19 and Mental Health

6

During late June, 40% of U.S. adults reported struggling with mental health or substance use*

ANXIETY/DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS



STARTED OR INCREASED SUBSTANCE USE



TRAUMA/STRESSOR-RELATED DISORDER SYMPTOMS



SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUICIDE†



*Based on a survey of U.S. adults aged ≥18 years during June 24-30, 2020

†In the 30 days prior to survey

Younger adults, racial/ethnic minorities, essential workers, and unpaid adult caregivers reported having experienced disproportionately worse mental health outcomes, increased substance use, and elevated suicidal ideation.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6932a1.htm>

Deaths of Despair

7

In the context of COVID-19, deaths of despair should be seen as the epidemic within the pandemic.

Well Being Trust (2020) predicted there may be up to 154,000 deaths of despair related to COVID-19.

RECENT STUDIES FOUND

1 point 
increase
in unemployment rates
increases suicide rates by
about 1 – 1.6%

COVID Vaccinations and SMI

People with serious mental illness (SMI) are at increased risk of being infected by coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) and have higher subsequent rates of hospitalization, morbidity, and mortality.

Li et.al., JAMA 2020

Wang Q, Volkow, ND et.al., World Psychiatry 2020



Substance Use During the Pandemic

9



- According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, as of June 2020, 13% of Americans reported starting or increasing substance use as a way of coping with stress or emotions related to COVID-19.
- Overdoses have also spiked since the onset of the pandemic.
- Rates are the highest ever recorded in a 12 month period.

Substance Use During the Pandemic: Drug Overdose Deaths

Percent Change
for Louisiana

31.3% ▲

Figure 1a. 12 Month-ending Provisional Counts of Drug Overdose Deaths: Louisiana

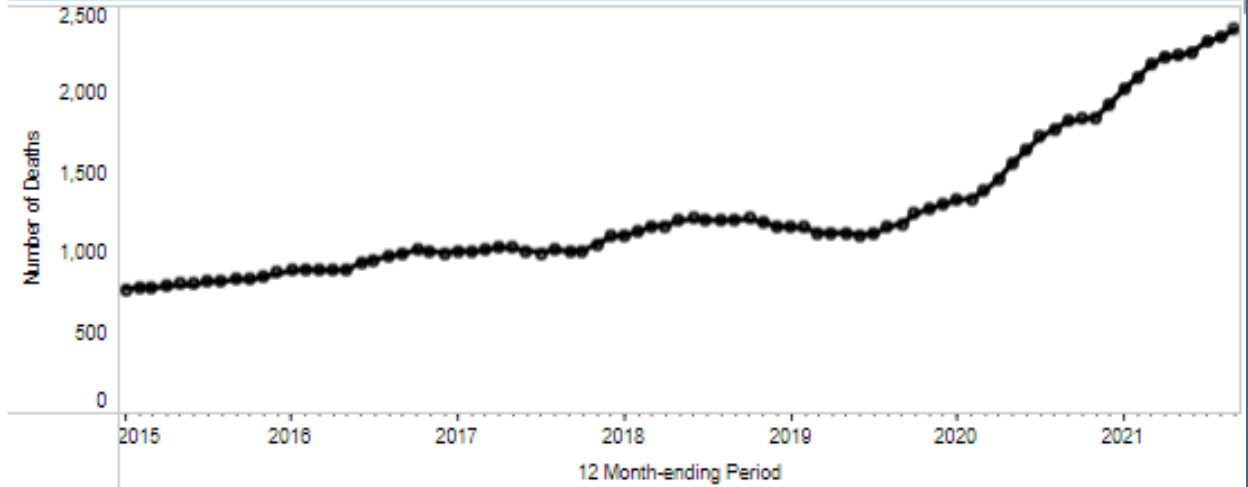
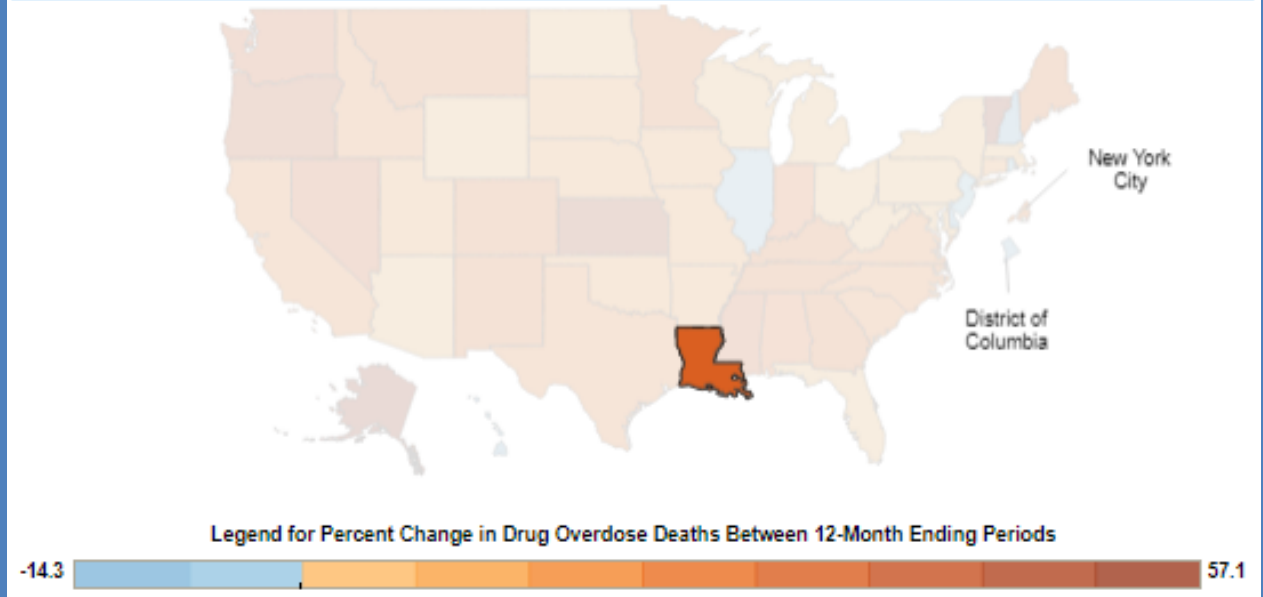
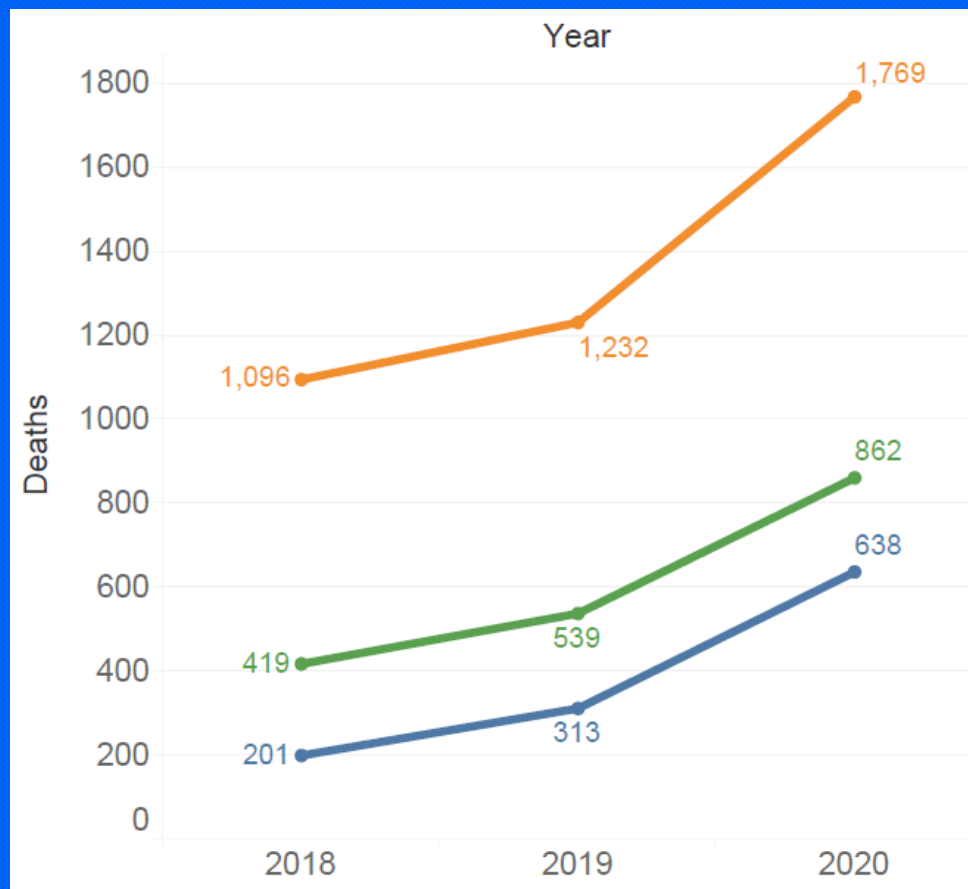


Figure 1b. Percent Change in Reported 12 Month-ending Count of Drug Overdose Deaths, by Jurisdiction: September 2020 to September 2021



Fatal Overdose* Comparison by Year

Louisiana, 2018 - 2020**



Source: *Louisiana Electronic Event Registration System*, extracted 03/2021 by the Louisiana Opioid Surveillance Initiative.

***"Overdose" deaths are defined as those where a drug poisoning was certified in the death record as the primary cause of death.

**2020 data are preliminary and do not represent the final count for 2020 overdose deaths.

NOTE: Louisiana was under a "stay at home" order between March 22 and May 15 in 2020. Phase 1 began May 15 and ended September 11.

Type
■ Drug Deaths
■ Opioid Poisoning Deaths
■ Synthetic Opioid Poisoning Deaths

Drivers for Increased Drug Use and Overdose

- Shifts in less potent drug availability
- Economic stress, fears and loneliness
- Reduction in resilience-promoting activities, like physical activity and social interactions
- Overdose risks associated with isolated drug use
- Closures of treatment facilities with reductions in care.



A group of diverse people of color, including a young man in the foreground wearing a patterned shirt, looking forward with serious expressions. The background is a solid blue color.

COVID, COVID Vaccinations and People of Color

- Disproportionality in healthcare
All Major systems for POCs.
- COVID-19 - poor generational healthcare = higher morbidity and mortality = Compounded Traumatization
- Result - Paralyzing Fear and Distrust of all Systems including Healthcare



Practice Implications

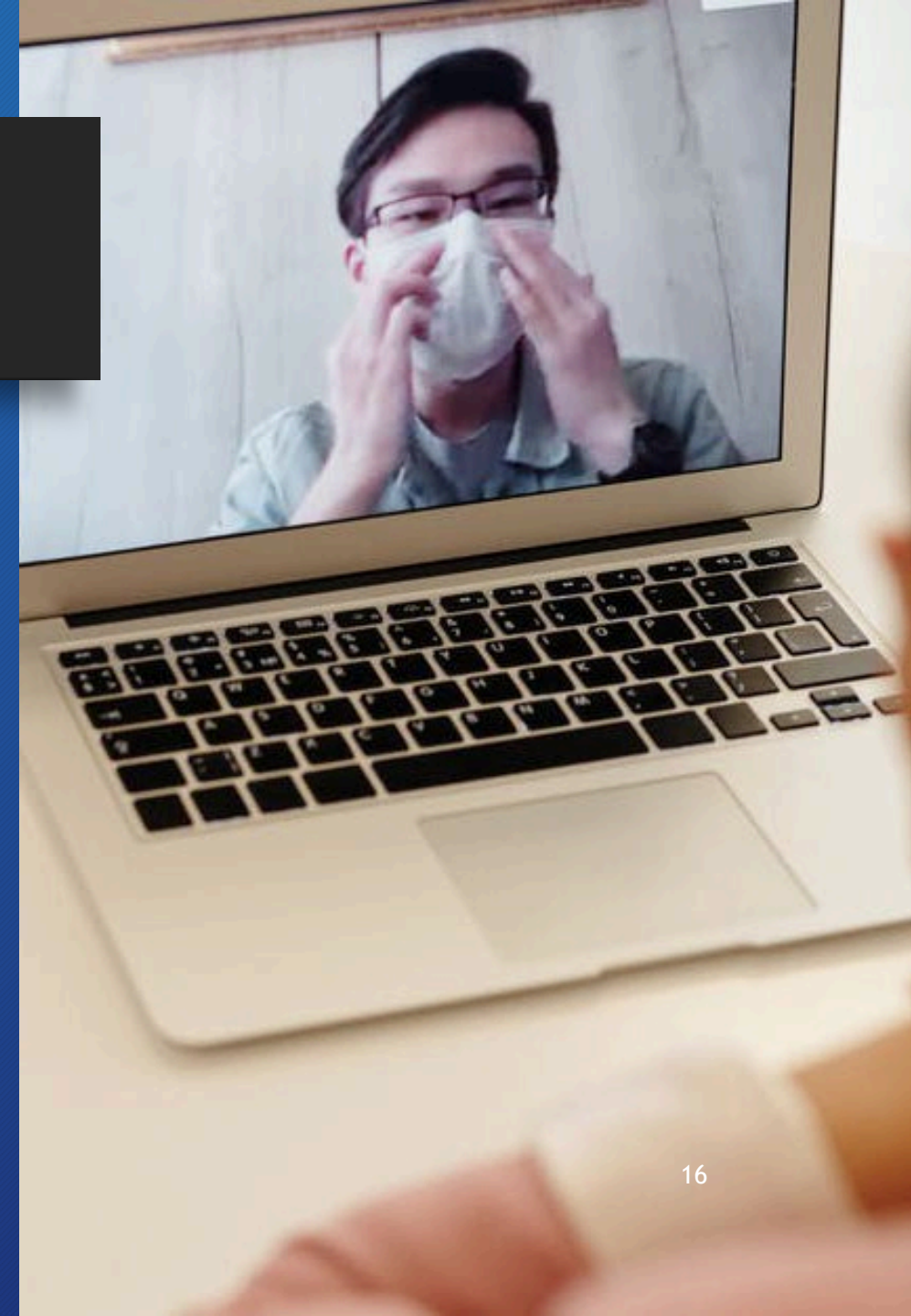
COVID-19 Pandemic and Telehealth

Implementation and use of telehealth as a mode of service delivery has been increasing in recent years.



COVID-19 Pandemic and Telehealth

By 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic makes it imperative for clinical practice to adapt rapidly to meet patient needs for SUD treatment while reducing risk of COVID-19 infection; hence, many providers are now using telehealth for the first time.



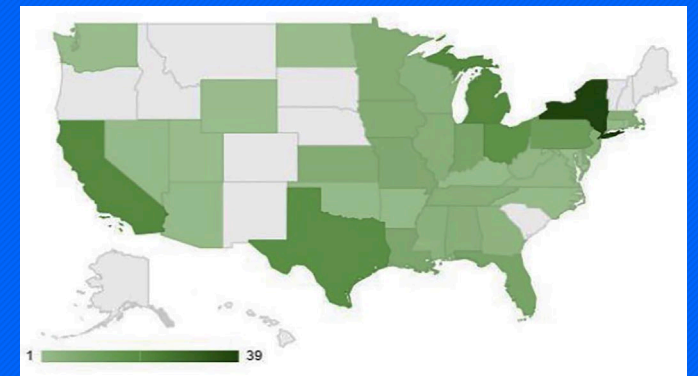
Pre-COVID Barriers:

- ❑ Regulatory (insurance reimbursement and state licensure requirements.)
- ❑ Provider-based
- ❑ Patient-based



State Regulations and Policies

States vary widely in the adoption of telehealth laws, waiving prescriber barriers, for SUD as well as controlled medications.



Billing and Reimbursement



- ✓ The billing codes for telehealth service types are the same for in-person services.
- ✓ The claims for telehealth must include 2 specific modifiers for reimbursement.
- ✓ The reimbursement rate is the *same* for telehealth and in-person visits.

Telehealth Law Updates

What could be lost with a Regression in Telehealth Law?

- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act lifted geographic restrictions allowing persons in underserved areas to reach out across state lines and connect with practitioners in locations where services are easier to come by.
- The Interim Final Rule allows telehealth sessions that utilize audio only to be treated as equivalent to audiovisual sessions.
- HIPAA restrictions loosened throughout the pandemic

What about Future planning for reimbursements?

- CMS is contemplating crafting a Physician Fee Schedule (PFS) update that will extend several telehealth reimbursement changes as far as the end of 2023. Further, the proposed update includes a provision to study the viability of making the changes permanent if accepted.
- Current proposed changes to the physician fee schedule propose more than dollar reduction in the conversion factor

Best Provider Practices for Telehealth Visits



- Establish a clean and professional-looking office space
- Reliable Internet
- Camera positioned at eye level
- Try to maintain a positive attitude
- Ensure patient is in a private setting
- Establish an alternative way to connect if service is disrupted (e.g., phone)



Services and Supports



Who We Are

23

- ✓ Metropolitan Human Services District is one of ten Local Governing Entities (LGE's) created in 2003 by the Louisiana Legislature for the provision of local services Orleans, St. Bernard and Plaquemines Parishes
- ✓ Our staff comprises the largest compliment of licensed and certified behavioral health and IDD professionals and contractors in the geographic area.

**Single Point of Entry via the MHSD Care Center
at (504) 568-3130**



Who We Serve

24

- ✓ Adults, children and families in Orleans, Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes.
- ✓ Medicaid, Medicare and uninsured populations with mental illness and addiction disorders. No one is denied access to services due to inability to pay.
- ✓ Individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities. Eligibility to receive supports and services is determined by State criteria and services and supports are not based on income or insurance status.
- ✓ We serve persons in crisis via our Metro Crisis Response Team and Behavioral Health Emergency Response Team



MHSD

METROPOLITAN HUMAN
SERVICES DISTRICT

6 Community-Based Locations

**Algiers Behavioral Health Center
(District Office)**
3100 General De Gaulle Drive
New Orleans, LA 70114

**Central City Behavioral Health &
Access Center**
2221 Philip Street
New Orleans, LA 70113

**Chartres-Pontchartrain Behavioral
Health Center**
719 Elysian Fields Avenue
New Orleans, LA 70117

New Orleans East Behavioral Health Center
5630 Read Boulevard (2nd Floor)
New Orleans, LA 70127

St. Bernard Behavioral Health Center
6624 St Claude Ave
Arabi, LA 70032

**Plaquemines Community C.A.R.E. Center
(MHSD Contractor)**
115 Keating Drive
Belle Chasse, LA 70337

MHSD Services - Ages 0-65

26

1. MI, SUD and IDD services
2. SUD Prevention Services
3. Crisis Response Services (MCRT, BHERT)



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID



**MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID®**

***Mental
Health
Crisis
vs
Emergency?***





28
MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID



MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID USA

ADULT



Know the Signs



Learn the Actions



Become a Lifeline

BECOME A MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID CHAMPION

Wednesday, March 23, 2022



Ashe Power House Theatre

1731 Baronne Street
New Orleans, LA 70113

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Learn how to identify,
understand, and respond
to signs of mental illness
and substance abuse
disorders.

**Mental Health
First Aid Training**

**DOING MENTAL
HEALTH
DIFFERENTLY**

 **NAMI** New Orleans
National Alliance on Mental Illness


MHSD
METROPOLITAN HUMAN
SERVICES DISTRICT


LPHI
LOUISIANA PUBLIC
HEALTH INSTITUTE

10 Tips to Guard Your Mental Health!!

30

- ☐ Remember to BREATHE
- ☐ Open up to someone
- ☐ Don't avoid asking for help
- ☐ Balance how you spend your time and with whom
- ☐ Find the answers for your kids' questions
- ☐ Hold on to the belief in something bigger than yourself.
- ☐ Be a Blessing to Someone else/ Help somebody
- ☐ Enjoy an occasional indulgence
- ☐ Eat Well! Move more! Sleep enough!
- ☐ Choose Joy!



www.mhsdla.org 504.568.3130

MHSD... *Where We Change Lives!*