



**KANE COUNTY
MENTAL HEALTH COUNCIL**

making a difference ...together

Message of the Month

November 2009

www.kanecountymentalhealth.org

Kane County Mental Health Council

- The Association for Individual Development
630-966-4000
- Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center
630-859-6562
- Delnor Community Hospital
630-208-3000
- Ecker Center for Mental Health Services
847-695-0484
- Family Counseling Service of Aurora
630-844-2662
- Family Service Association of Greater Elgin Area
847-695-3680
- Gateway Foundation/Aurora
630-966-7400
- Greater Elgin Family Care Center 847-608-1344
- Kane County Health Department 630-208-3801
- Larkin Center 847-695-5656
- League of Women Voters
630-365-2138
- Mental Health & Mental Retardation Services, Inc.
630-892-5456
- National Alliance on Mental Illness, DeKalb, Kane-South, Kendall Counties, Inc.
630-896-6264
- National Alliance on Mental Illness-Kane County
847-931-4715
- Provena Mercy Medical Center
630-801-2657
- Provena St. Joseph Hospital
847-931-5521
- Senior Services Association
847-741-0404
- Suicide Prevention Services 630-482-9696
- TriCity Family Services
630-232-1070
- Visiting Nurse Association of Fox Valley 630-978-9835

Dual diagnosis: mental health/substance abuse

In the context of mental health treatment, the term “dual diagnosis” refers to consumers who have both mental health and substance abuse issues. It has been known for some time that the rate of substance abuse among people suffering from mental health issues is staggering – 45-75%, depending on diagnosis. Similarly, approximately 75% of individuals with substance abuse issues also suffer from a mental illness. Consumers with an undiagnosed mental illness may try to “self” medicate with drugs of abuse. While these drugs of abuse may yield some symptom reduction in the short term, typically they have undesirable long term consequences. Substance abuse may act as a catalyst for the onset of mental health symptoms, or may worsen existing symptoms. For example, chronic cocaine use alters the chemical pathways in the brain in a way that produces symptoms identical to schizophrenia.

In the past, it was believed that mental health and substance abuse issues should be treated in separate contexts, often sequentially. Today it is understood that treatment providers should address both disorders simultaneously, and should be mindful of the interacting course of these illnesses. However, the situation for treatment providers in Illinois is complicated by the fact that separate funding streams exist for mental health and substance abuse treatment.

The good news is that consumers can often experience sustained and meaningful recovery from concurrent mental health and substance abuse disorders. When mental health symptoms are properly treated, it can become easier to abstain from drugs of abuse. Similarly, when substance abuse issues are addressed, mental health symptoms may diminish, and can be treated in a more direct and effective manner. If you or someone you know suffers from mental health and substance abuse issues, your treatment provider can help identify and implement a comprehensive treatment plan to get started with recovery.

Info Box: Call 800-662-HELP (4357) or visit the online treatment locator at www.samhsa.gov/treatment

The Helpline is a confidential, free, 24-hour-a-day, 365-day-a-year, information service, in English and Spanish, for individuals and family members facing substance abuse issues. This service provides referrals to local treatment facilities, support groups, and community-based organizations. Callers can also order free publications and other information in print on substance abuse and mental health issues.