ECHO Idaho: Opioid Addiction and Treatment

Psychiatric and Substance Use Disorder Treatment during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Learning Objectives

• Quickly review co-occurring SUDs and psychiatric illness
• Discuss the benefits and limitations of telemedicine
• Review changes in regulations during national emergency (COVID-19 pandemic)
• Discuss ways to help patients and providers manage stress and anxiety during national emergency
Substance Use Disorders and Psychiatric Illness

• Significant comorbidity of SUDs with primary psychiatric disorders:
  – Mood disorders (MDD, Bipolar Disorder, dysthymia)
  – Anxiety disorders (GAD, social phobia, panic disorder)
  – Trauma (PTSD)
  – ADHD
  – Personality Disorders
Substance Use Disorders and Psychiatric Illness

- Clarifications in the DSM 5: symptoms are not attributable to substances
- Intoxication and withdrawal from different substances can persist and can mimic primary psychiatric disorders
- Treatment may be beneficial, but remember, telling a patient they DO NOT need a medication can be very therapeutic!
Telemedicine
What Is It?

• Synchronous/live videoconferencing: connects providers and patients in real time for direct care delivery
• Telephone not included!
Telemedicine
Treatment of Substance Use Disorders

5 studies looked at for Opioid Use Disorder

• 2 studies on psychotherapy: Similar outcomes on substance use and satisfaction compared to in-person care

• 3 studies on buprenorphine and methadone: Similar outcomes, better retention in rural areas

(Lin et al. 2019)
Telemedicine
Treatment of Substance Use Disorders

(Haffajee et al. 2019)
Telemedicine and COVID-19 Regulatory Changes

1. Loosening of Ryan Haight Act
2. HIPAA penalties waived for “good faith use of telehealth”
3. Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) and take home medications
4. Medicare reimbursement

https://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/coronavirus.html
Managing Stress and Anxiety During Pandemic

- **Social distancing:** keeping a safe distance (approximately 6 feet) from others and avoiding gathering spaces such as schools, churches, concert halls and public transportation.

- **Quarantine:** avoiding contact with others if a person has been exposed to coronavirus to see if they become ill.

- **Isolation:** separating an individual who has contracted COVID-19 to prevent them from spreading it to others.
Managing Stress and Anxiety During Pandemic

• Those with psychiatric illness and substance use disorders are particularly vulnerable during pandemic
• Isolation is the opposite of what we normally recommend
• Loss of employment, housing, death of loved ones can exacerbate mental illness
• Medications have limited role in treating these symptoms
Managing Stress and Anxiety During Pandemic

- Limit news consumption to reliable sources
- Encourage staying virtually connected
- Maintain healthy lifestyle
- Follow a daily routine
- Encourage use of coping skills rather than medications
References


• https://www.samhsa.gov
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