



## **Module 5: Health Conditions Impacting Individuals and Families**

### **Summary**

The purpose of this training module is to provide counties with the resources necessary to provide an introductory training on the various health conditions that may impact the individuals and families we serve.

This module includes:

- A written overview “Health Conditions Impacting Individuals and Families”, that includes links to data and online resources,
- A lesson plan outline/agenda for conducting a training, and
- A Learning Guide designed to be used by a facilitator working with one or more learners to reinforce the training content and enhance the learning experience. Though designed to be used by a facilitator, the Learning Guide can be easily adapted for use by individual learners.

How to use this training module:

These materials may be incorporated into an existing employee orientation or induction training, as a component of an expanded Foundations of Human Services training series, or as a stand-alone training.

The written overview serves as the basis for development of a training video or online LMS learning module. For each key theme discussed, there are links to online resources such as interactive websites, videos and documentaries, and data sources. It may serve as a resource for a trainer or facilitator or be provided directly to the learner.

The Learning Guide is designed to support and enhance the learning experience. Whether used by a trainer in a classroom setting, a supervisor meeting one-on-one with an employee, or a facilitator to guide a group discussion, the Learning Guide offers discussion prompts, suggests considerations for self-reflection, and provides ideas for the learner to enhance their practice.

**PLEASE NOTE: Test all links before using them in a training as they may change or no longer work over time.**

A Bay Area Social Services Consortium Project (**Revised 3/8/19**)

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## **Module 5: Health Conditions Impacting Individuals and Families**

### **Overview**

Everybody experiences illness at one time or another in their life. Think back over the past few months, or year, how often have you felt ill enough that you didn't want, or couldn't, go to work or deal with household or other life responsibilities? Have you ever felt so tired and worn down that the thought of getting dressed seemed overwhelming, like more than you could do? Well, for many people, these conditions exist day after day, week after week, month after month, and even, for some, year after year.

Many individuals and families seeking, or being referred to, public social services experience a wide range of personal, cultural, societal and environmental conditions that impact their ability to function at a level necessary to be self-reliant. These conditions may be visible, as with a physical disability, or not, as with a chronic health condition, mental health issue or domestic abuse. Or, a person may be experiencing trauma – current or past – that profoundly affects them. These conditions may impact one or more family members and may or may not be experienced by your primary client or customer. They may be known and understood by the individual or family or they may not. Any of these conditions may interfere with a person's with ability to maintain employment, form bonds or relationships, or care for themselves or their children.

### **Physical Health Issues or Disabilities**

Just as there are many potential health issues that may affect individuals in the short term, there are a vast array of health problems or disabilities that may potentially affect clients who seek or are referred to social services. They may include physical disabilities that impact one's ability to move freely without an assistive device, or disabilities that are less visible, as with traumatic brain injuries that affect a person's ability to manage basic life activities. In addition to physical disabilities, many may experience chronic health conditions or diseases such as autoimmune diseases like Lupus or rheumatoid arthritis, or life-threatening ones like cancer – all of which may result in temporary, intermittent, or permanent disability. In fact, more than 40% of Americans have a chronic health condition([http://www.nationalhealthcouncil.org/sites/default/files/NHC\\_Files/Pdf\\_Files/AboutChronicDisease.pdf](http://www.nationalhealthcouncil.org/sites/default/files/NHC_Files/Pdf_Files/AboutChronicDisease.pdf)). For those individuals with adequate health insurance and access to quality medical care, these conditions may not substantially impact their ability to be self-sufficient and care for themselves and their families. In other cases, where their health insurance is inadequate, or there is limited access to quality care, these conditions can be debilitating, impacting all aspects of their lives. This may be the case regardless of insurance or medical care, depending on the severity of the disease and symptoms.

Because many types of health problems may not be visible to others, it's important for you, as a service provider, to learn about a client's potential health challenges, while maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality, when you initiate services. Having an understanding of the client's limitations, as well as capabilities, will help you know how to best provide support. For example, if a person has an autoimmune disease that causes her to be very stiff and sore early in the day, setting appointments for the morning will create added challenges and stress that might negatively impact her ability to successfully access or use services. Conversely, someone who has chronic fatigue syndrome may be exhausted by the afternoon, so activities that are set for the morning will work better. In any case, it's important to be aware of any health conditions which may impact your client's ability to effectively utilize services.

In addition to physical disabilities and health problems, a person needing service may have a developmental or learning disability which may have an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Again, these may be visibly evident, or they may not. These conditions must also be considered when serving a client.

#### **Articles on chronic illness:**

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/4062-chronic-illness>

<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC1070773/>

#### **Articles on physical disabilities:**

<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-home-health-aide/chapter/working-with-people-with-physical-disabilities/>

<https://kines.rutgers.edu/dshw/disabilities/physical/1060-physical-disabilities>

<https://hpi.georgetown.edu/agingsociety/pubhtml/workplace/workplace.html>

#### **Videos:**

Disability: The Truth (28:49 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ4JOomkyNI>

Communicating with People with Disabilities (2:16 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvVSGgm1Rfw>

Interacting Appropriately with People with Disabilities (3:40 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1aDEFIXq8>

TED Talk – Intellectual Disabilities (15:14 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BURbLmQL1BE>

Being Sick vs. Having a Chronic Illness (1:31 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoRe6JnNQu4>

TED Talk - Having a Disease Doctors Can't Diagnose (Living with a chronic disease):

[https://www.ted.com/talks/jen\\_brea\\_what\\_happens\\_when\\_you\\_have\\_a\\_disease\\_doctors\\_can\\_t\\_diagnose?language=en#t-63871](https://www.ted.com/talks/jen_brea_what_happens_when_you_have_a_disease_doctors_can_t_diagnose?language=en#t-63871)

### **Mental Health Issues**

The range of emotions experienced by human beings is vast. All of us have periods, or at least moments of, anxiety, fear, sadness, or depression. For some individuals, one or more of these emotions may be an ongoing and unrelenting part of their lives. Anxiety and depression affect 40 million adults, or 18% of the population in the US, and nearly 70% of Americans have experienced trauma at some point in their lives, with 20% going on to experience Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. (<https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers>) In fact, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), as many as one in five adults experiences mental illness in a given year, with one in twenty-five experiencing a serious mental illness. Any of these conditions may affect a person's ability to maintain employment, care for themselves or their children, or even seek support. For those who access or are referred to social services and

experience these types of mental health issues, it may be difficult for them to participate in or complete programs and services they are offered or directed to take part in.

Because mental illness is not generally obvious to the casual observer, a person's behavior may be the only clue to a mental health issue. A social services worker might see some of the following behaviors in a person that could signify they have a mental health disorder:

- Angry outbursts, irritability or frustration, even over small matters
- Tiredness and lack of energy, so that even small tasks take extra effort
- Anxiety, agitation or restlessness
- Slowed thinking, speaking or body movements
- Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions and remembering things

These and other symptoms of a mental illness may result in missed or late arrivals to appointments, inability to complete tasks such as completing or returning paperwork, and resistance to accessing resources, among others.

### **Potential Causes of Mental Illness**

As with other chronic health conditions, there are many conditions and circumstances that may lead to mental health disorders. These may include biological conditions, some of which are hereditary; others may be a result of prenatal exposure to environmental toxins such as alcohol or drugs. One study suggests that trauma to the head of a child between the ages of 11 and 15 was a strong predictor of later development of bipolar disorder, depression, and schizophrenia.<sup>1</sup>

There may also be psychological factors that impact the development of mental illness including experiences of severe or prolonged trauma, significant childhood loss or trauma, as in the case of child abuse, or early loss of a parent to death, incarceration, or addiction.

Environmental conditions, such as dysfunctional family or community life in early childhood, and drug or alcohol abuse and domestic violence experienced at any age, may be additional factors that contribute to the development of mental illness.

An individual experiencing a mental health disorder may experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Inability to focus in order to complete tasks related to work or school activities,
- Loss of appetite or overeating,
- Feelings of overwhelming sadness, anxiety, or fear,
- Feelings of worthlessness,

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<sup>1</sup> Orlovska, S., Pedersen, M. S., Benros, M. E., Mortensen, P. B., Agerbo, E., & Nordentoft, M. (2014). Head injury as risk factor for psychiatric disorders: A nationwide register-based follow-up study of 113,906 persons with head injury. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 171(4), 463-469. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2013.13020190>

- Drug or alcohol abuse,
- Insomnia,
- Increased family, relationship, or social conflicts,
- Problems with memory, concentration, or the ability to process information, and
- Poverty and homelessness.

Any one of these conditions may impact a person's ability to function effectively in the world without support, therapy, medication, or all three. For some, access to mental health services may be limited or unavailable thereby impacting their ability to benefit from resources designed to treat their illness.

**Articles on Mental Illness:**

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/syc-20374968>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/explore-mental-health/articles/how-support-someone-mental-health-problem>

[https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Career\\_Services\\_Guide\\_WEB\\_May20\\_2015.pdf](https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Career_Services_Guide_WEB_May20_2015.pdf)

**Articles on Symptoms and Causes of Mental Illness:**

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20356007>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/syc-20374968>

**Resources and Articles on Mental Illness Prevalence:**

<https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers>

**Videos on Mental Illness:**

TED Talk – No Health Without Mental Health (10:16 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zQbtDaJCI0M>

Depression is a Disease of Civilization (22:20 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drv3BP0Fdi8>

Voices of Experience – Insights from counselors, peers, and people living with mental illness (6:45 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4Cv9dIB4ao&feature=youtu.be>

TED Talk – A Tale of Mental Illness (14:52 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f6CILJA110Y>

"Back From the Edge" - Borderline Personality Disorder (48:11 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=967Ckat7f98>

We Need to Talk About Depression (12:00 min): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoJJeK\\_shIA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hoJJeK_shIA)

Living with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (5:00 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVGn5kSCNJc>

How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime (16:02 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk>

5 Ways to help someone struggling with their mental health (6:52):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIUcc8g17wg>

Invisible - Uncovering Mental Illness (46:03 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1IP2xGevE0>

## **Alcohol and Substance Use Disorders**

Both physical and mental health play a significant role in a person's ability to access and benefit from social service programs, but they are not the only potential conditions that may affect the people you serve. Substance use, abuse, and addiction may be a factor that impacts an individual's health and mental health, and may also prevent him or her from benefitting from services.

Still perceived by many as a sort of "moral failing," addiction is now understood by the medical community, as well as members of the public who are well informed, to be a disease that, like heart disease, cancer or diabetes, is the result of a combination of behavioral, biological and environmental factors.

Research on identical and fraternal twins, and adopted children reveals that as much as 50% of the risk of a person becoming addicted is based on genetics. And, environment accounts for a significant percentage of risk as well. For example, just as stress, along with diet and exercise, plays a role in the development of high blood pressure, so it does in the development of addiction. Other environmental influences also contribute to risk. Where a person lives, whom they associate with, what their home life is, and what community resources exist all contribute to whether or not someone may be at risk for addiction. One study, reported by the National Institutes of Health National Institute on Drug Abuse, noted that "a community that provides healthy after-school activities has been shown to reduce vulnerability to drug addiction," and that "recent data show that access to exercise can discourage drug-seeking behavior."

While environment, behavior and genetics are each individually powerful forces influencing an individual's risk, their complex interaction may put a person at even further risk. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, or NIDA, "exposure to drugs or stress in a person's social or cultural environment can alter both gene expression and gene function, which, in some cases, may persist throughout a person's life. Research also suggests that genes can play a part in how a person responds to his or her environment, placing some people at higher risk for disease than others."

With greater understanding of the nature of addiction, the medical community has reframed the way we speak about it. Now identified as 'substance use disorder', researchers, doctors, substance abuse experts, and others have a language that reflects an understanding of addiction as a disease. This, along with further research, is leading to better forms of treatment as well as approaches to support those who need it.

## **Alcohol Use Disorder**

While substance abuse disorder can occur with the use of any drug, alcohol is the most frequently used, and abused, substance in the United States. ([https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report\\_2790/ShortReport-2790.html](https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_2790/ShortReport-2790.html)) Alcohol consumption is often glamorized in the movies and promoted throughout American culture as a way to celebrate – champagne glasses raised to ring in the new year and toasting the newly married couple are commonplace. While alcoholic beverages may be marketed as a way to add enjoyment to life, for some it can lead to alcohol use disorder.

In 2017, a study presented in the Journal of the American Medical Association that found alcohol use disorder (commonly referred to as alcoholism) had risen to 12.7% among adults 18 years of age and older. This represents a rise of 49% in the decade between 2001-02 and 2011-12.

Heavy drinking also increased. The economist, sociologist, and author of the book, “Paying the Tab: The Costs and Benefits of Alcohol Control,” Philip J. Cook, Ph.D. analyzed data from a survey of 43,000 Americans on their drinking habits. He determined that the top 10 percent of drinkers drink an average of 61 drinks per week, with the next 10 percent drinking 22 per week – a substantial quantity.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, deaths from alcohol, not including those from alcohol-related accidents and homicides, reached a 35-year high in 2014, killing over 30,000 Americans, greater than the number of deaths from heroin and prescription opioid drugs combined.

Some of the physical signs you might see if a person you are working with has an alcohol use disorder include:

- Smell of alcohol on the breath,
- Broken capillaries on face and nose,
- Yellow color to the white part of eyes or in the skin,
- Weight loss due to the neglect of eating in favor of drinking
- Dry skin and brittle hair and nails, and
- Poor hygiene.

With the exception of the smell of alcohol being on a person’s breath and poor hygiene, most of these physical symptoms only occur after someone has been drinking for many years, so you may not know if a person you’re working with has alcohol use disorder.

## **Substance Use Disorder**

Though alcohol is the most commonly used and abused drug, drugs such as opiates, methamphetamine, and even marijuana, may also negatively affect a person’s self and family care, employability, and ability to manage day to day tasks.

The use, misuse, and abuse of opiates has risen to become a national crisis. According to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, “Every day, more than 130 people in the United States die after

overdosing on opioids,” and, in 2017, “more than 47,000 Americans died as a result of an opioid overdose, including prescription opioids, heroin, and fentanyl.” It also estimates that 1.7 million Americans experienced substance use disorder related to prescription opioids, with an additional 652,000 suffering from heroin use disorder.

The National Institutes of Health reports that the use of heroin has been significantly increasing over the past decade. The number of people who used it for the first time in 2016, 170,000, was nearly double the number in 2006 (90,000). What was once primarily an, inner-city drug, heroin is now increasingly common in suburban and rural areas. Some research suggests the increased usage of heroin to the increase in doctor-prescribed opioid pain medicines such a Vicodin and OxyContin. The research suggest that the misuse of these drugs may have led to heroin use. NIDA's heroin website states that, “Nearly 80 percent of Americans using heroin (including those in treatment) reported misusing prescription opioids first”.

Some of the signs you might see if you are working with a person under the influence of heroin include:

- Shortness of breath,
- Constricted pupils,
- Sudden changes in behavior or actions,
- Disorientation,
- Droopy appearance, as if extremities are heavy, and
- Cycles of alertness followed by suddenly nodding off.

While opiate use and abuse has received much attention in the media in recent years, illegal methamphetamine use has also been on the rise. Methamphetamine use, commonly called ‘meth’ or in its crystalized, smokable form, ‘crystal meth’, was curtailed in the early 2000s by federal and state laws that limited access to one of the primary ingredients in making the drug, pseudoephedrine. However, its use has been on the rise in recent years due to the drug being imported by cartels from countries where the ingredients are readily available.

A nervous system stimulant, methamphetamine works to increase the output of norepinephrine, which increases oxygen in the brain, making a person think faster and clearer, and to the heart, making muscles work faster and harder. It also increases the output of dopamine, the “feel good” neurotransmitter. Its use results in high levels of energy coupled with a feeling of euphoria, making it highly addictive.

According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information’s online resource [Pub Med Central](#), chronic use of methamphetamine may result any or all of the following health risks:

- Serious medical conditions affecting multiple organ systems,
- Cardiovascular risks such as chest pain, arrhythmias, hypertension, cardiomyopathy (an enlarged, thick or rigid heart), and heart attack, even in relatively young users,
- Mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and psychosis,

- Skin infection,
- Dental problems,
- Strokes and seizures, and
- Movement disorders.

Persons under the influence of methamphetamine may become agitated or violent and its use is known to play a role in domestic violence. According to a 2000 Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) report, methamphetamine use is “in almost 90 percent of the domestic dispute cases against women investigated across the U.S.”

While methamphetamine use may not currently be as prevalent as opiates, in a 2012 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, “approximately 1.2 million people (0.4 percent of the population) reported using methamphetamine in the past year, and 440,000 (0.2 percent) reported using it in the past month.”

Though both opiates and methamphetamine are often the substances we think of when discussing mind-altering drugs, far more commonly used, and now used legally in several states, is marijuana or cannabis. While recently heralded for its medical use, cannabis is frequently used as a recreational drug. Its effects are less dramatic than other drugs, its primary mind-altering chemical, THC, overactivates the part of the brain that has receptors for the body’s own THC-like chemicals resulting in effects such as:

- Feelings of euphoria,
- Changes in mood,
- Altered senses,
- Impaired memory, and
- Difficulty problem solving

And when taken in high doses, the potential for a user to experience:

- Hallucinations,
- Delusions, and
- Psychosis.

According to the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#), “compared to those who don't use marijuana, those who frequently use large amounts report lower life satisfaction, poorer mental and physical health and more relationship problems. People also report less academic and career success.” And, research suggests that marijuana use is linked to increased work place accidents and injuries as well as higher absenteeism.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Zwerling C, Ryan J, Orav EJ. Under the Influence? Drugs and the American Workforce, *JAMA*. 1990;264(20):2639-2643.

### Articles on Substances and Substance Use Disorder:

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/genetics-epigenetics-addiction>

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction>

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/11/study-one-in-eight-american-adults-are-alcoholics/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.4e545da13ceb](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/11/study-one-in-eight-american-adults-are-alcoholics/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.4e545da13ceb)

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4440680/>

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana#ref>

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>

### Videos on Addiction (Substance Use Disorder):

Addiction Neuroscience 101 (23:29 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwZcPwIRRcc>

The Craving Brain: Neuroscience of Uncontrollable Urges (1:27:23 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0L1MN2yCs>

Addiction - PBS Nova Documentary (53:20 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qJ-qX3yrxC0>

Disease Concept of Addiction (1:03:02 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1mjGLqLvxA>

The Chemistry of Addiction (11:49 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukFjH9odsXw>

Trauma and Addiction – A Crash Course (10:50 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=343ORgL3klc>

American Addiction – The Nation’s Struggle with Opioid Addiction (34:26 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNj89ohoYQ0>

What is Addiction (3:24 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5sOh4gKPIg>

The Addicted Brain (5:41 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1G93lz-JK-E>

Why Do Our Brains Get Addicted: (16:22 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mnd2-al4LCU>

### Multiple Illnesses – Comorbidity or Co-occurrence

For an individual living with any health challenge, whether a chronic physical illness, mental health illness, or substance use disorder, successfully managing life’s many details can become overwhelming. For someone who is experiencing multiple illnesses, the difficulties increase. The term for when a person has more than one illness is comorbidity or co-occurrence. Co-occurrence of illnesses may be “concurrent”, when two or more conditions exist at the same time, or “successive”, where they occur at different times in a person’s life. An example of successive co-occurrence within physical illness would be a person may have rheumatoid arthritis for several years and later be diagnosed with cancer. A person experiencing concurrent

co-occurring mental health disorders might have chronic depression and anxiety that are both experienced at the same time. In addition to health, mental health, or substance use disorders co-occurring with each other, or they may co-occur across illness types, such as when a person has anxiety disorder and also alcohol use disorder.

When a person experiences co-occurring conditions, it may be because one conditions caused the other, or there were underlying factors that contributed to the development of both illnesses, or there may be no relation between their development. Whatever the cause, the result is that a person who is experiencing multiple illnesses will likely require more support to participate in services and programs you provide.

### **Providing Compassionate and Competent Service**

So, what does all of this mean to you, the social services worker? Whether you are working with someone with a chronic health condition, mental illness, or alcohol or substance use disorder, it may be hard for them to set and follow through with plans, maintain employment, manage family responsibilities, make good decisions, learn new information, and in the case of a mental health or substance use disorder, control impulses, and learn new information.

The most important thing you can do as a social services worker is to educate yourself on all of these conditions, which may potentially affect the people you serve. The more you know, the more compassionate and helpful you can be as a service provider. Some additional steps to take include:

- Be kind. People struggling with any kind of health problem, regardless of its origins, should be treated with kindness. As the saying goes, “Treat others as you would have them treat you.” Remember, you are a representative of the organization and county government. All members of the public should be treated with kindness. This is especially true for those who are struggling with health concerns.
- Be empathetic. Expressing empathy, an understanding of the challenges your client is experiencing, will help him or her feel supported. Do this rather than express sympathy, which may leave the person feeling like you think they are a victim. This will not serve to support their success.
- Be respectful. Everyone we serve is deserving of our respect. If you are not in a position to determine an individual’s health status, or how it may be impacting them, it is best to not make assumptions about them, or their behavior or choices. It’s best to treat them with respect. If a person’s behavior is unacceptable, tell them and let them know what is expected and why.
- Be clear. Providing clear, relevant and appropriate information will help insure that someone who may be experiencing memory or attention difficulties understands what you need or want them to do. Clarify any questions they may have. Don’t assume something is “self-evident”
- Be consistent. Knowing what to expect will help someone challenged by health, mental health, or substance use issues participate effectively in services. Surprises are stressful and may lead to further difficulties for them as they engage in program activities.

- Be patient. Whether you work in reception, protective services, eligibility determination, workforce development, or other area, it's important to be aware that people with a chronic health issues, mental illness, or substance use issues will likely need additional support to access and utilize services. It may require additional patience and understanding in order to serve them well.
- Maintain good self-care. Working in a social services organization can be stressful under any circumstances. If your work requires you to provide service to someone who is in need of additional support, or whose behavior is challenging, regardless of the cause, it can impact your own sense of well-being. Be sure to make time to care for yourself in ways that are meaningful to you.
- Engage in good self-care. It is important, when you are working with someone who is experiencing one or more of these challenging conditions, to make sure you take time to care for yourself. Set a plan, with specific activities, that will help you remember to care for yourself as you do others.
- Ask the person what works for them to be successful. All of us know what has been helpful for us in the past as we've faced difficulties or adversity. If you are a case worker, be sure to ask your client what has worked for them in the past. This will help guide you to potential activities as you work with them to develop a plan for future success.
- Seek further support. If you aren't sure how best to work or interact with someone who is affected by a health, mental health, or substance use problem, seek assistance from a colleague or supervisor who has more knowledge or experience with this kind of situation.

Each one of us has experienced challenges with our health, our sense of well-being, and perhaps even our use of alcohol or other substances at some point in our lives. It's important for us to remember that those who seek our assistance, or are referred to our services, may be experiencing such a challenge right now. They may be minimally or moderately, or perhaps profoundly, affected by one of these conditions. Our knowledge, compassion and understanding are some of our greatest strengths as helping professionals as we strive to provide high quality services.

## Module 5: Health Conditions Impacting Individuals and Families

### Lesson Plan for Classroom-Based Learning

**Training:** Health Conditions Impacting Individuals and Families

**Time:** 4 – 12 hours

**Using this agenda:** Training may be provided as a 4-hour general overview of all health conditions or may be broken into separate sessions. For a general overview, present or conduct activities in the sections without highlights and italics. To present each health condition as its own training, add some, or all, of the “OPTIONAL” activities and videos in *italics* and **blue-colored** fields.

Time	General Overview segment	How
<i>Time</i>	<i>Optional</i>	<i>How</i>

**Objectives:**

Participants will have a basic understanding of the following:

1. The kinds of health and mental health conditions that impact individuals’ ability to be self-sufficient,
2. The prevalence and impacts of drug and alcohol abuse and addiction (or substance use disorder) on individuals’ ability to be self-sufficient and care for themselves and their families, and
3. How all these conditions impact an individual’s ability to effectively access and utilize services, and
4. Ways for the social services worker to provide compassionate service.

Time	Activity	How
10 minutes	Introduce topic, objectives, and why this training matters to participants’ work.	Present
30 minutes	<p>Discussion Question: “Have you had any experience with _____ (a health, mental health, or addiction issue, or all three, depending on training topic) either in your personal or professional life?”</p> <p>Provide data (from training narrative) on percentage of occurrence of each condition.</p> <p>Discussion: “Given this data, how many of the people you work with may have one or more of these conditions?”</p>	<p>Facilitate discussion</p> <p>Present data</p>

5 minutes	<p>Chronic Health Condition/Illness</p> <p>Present video: Chronic Illness vs. Being Sick</p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoRe6JnNQu4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoRe6JnNQu4</a></p>	Present video
15 minutes	<p>Ask learners for types of chronic illnesses they know of. (This may be done with full group or in smaller groups or diads that record and present out)</p> <p>Present any additional types of chronic health conditions that might impact a client's ability to be self-reliant.</p> <p>Ask learners for their ideas or knowledge related to the identified chronic health conditions and symptoms.</p> <p>Present: Information and/or data regarding symptoms of conditions</p> <p>Capture information on chart pad or other tool.</p> <p>Discussion Question: How might these conditions and symptoms may impact a client's ability to participate in services?</p>	Present Facilitate discussion
40 minutes	<p><i>OPTIONAL: View supplemental video</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/jen_brea_what_happens_when_you_have_a_disease_doctors_can_t_diagnose?language=en#t-63871">https://www.ted.com/talks/jen_brea_what_happens_when_you_have_a_disease_doctors_can_t_diagnose?language=en#t-63871</a></p> <p><i>Discussion: Choose from one of the Learning Guide discussion questions, Modify as necessary to be relevant to video content.</i></p>	View video Facilitate discussion
15 minutes	<p><i>Physical Disabilities</i></p> <p><i>Discussion Question: "What kinds of physical disabilities might you encounter with people you serve? How might this impact their ability to be self-reliant, and to participate in services?"</i></p>	Facilitate discussion
10 minutes	<p><i>OPTIONAL: Read narrative and self-test (from beginning of page through self-test M7-4)</i></p> <p><a href="https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-home-health-aide/c/hapter/working-with-people-with-physical-disabilities/">https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-home-health-aide/c/hapter/working-with-people-with-physical-disabilities/</a></p>	Self-guided activity
45 minutes	<p><i>OPTIONAL: View video "Disability, The Truth"</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ4JOomkyNI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ4JOomkyNI</a></p>	View video

	<i>Discussion Question: “What did you learn about living with a physical disability? What, if any, of your perceptions, beliefs, thoughts were changed by watching this video?”</i>	<i>Facilitate discussion</i>
<i>10 – 30 minutes</i>	<i>OPTIONAL: Select one of the videos from the Learning Guide to view and facilitate a discussion.</i>	<i>View video</i> <i>Facilitate discussion</i>
<i>15 – 60 minutes</i>	<i>OPTIONAL: Select one or more discussion questions from the Learning Guide and facilitate a discussion either with the full group, in smaller groups or in diads</i>	<i>Facilitate discussion</i>
5 minutes	TRANSITION: Introduce topic of Mental Illness	Present
10 minutes	Discussion Question: “Why might it be important for you to have an understanding of issues related to mental illness?”	Facilitate discussion
10 minutes	Discussion Question: “Have you had any experience with mental illness in either your personal or professional life? If yes, what have you learned from it?”	Facilitate discussion
5 minutes	Provide data on prevalence of mental illness from <a href="https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers">https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers</a>	Present
7 minutes	View video: <a href="#">Voices of Experience</a>	View video
5 minutes	Present some of the symptoms or characteristics of mental health disorders that learners may see or experience	Present
10 minutes	View video: <a href="#">No Health without Mental Health</a>	View video
15 minutes	Select one or two questions from the Learning Guide for discussion	Facilitate discussion
<i>20 minutes</i>	<i>OPTIONAL: <a href="#">View video Living with Generalized Anxiety Disorder</a></i> <i>Discussion Question: “In what ways might someone with GAD experience barriers to fully participating in services?”</i>	<i>View video</i> <i>Facilitate discussion</i>
<i>30 minutes</i>	<i>OPTIONAL: <a href="#">View video A Tale of Mental Illness</a></i> <i>Select one or two discussion questions from the Learning Guide for discussion</i>	<i>View video</i> <i>Facilitate discussion</i>

20 – 40 minutes	<p><i>OPTIONAL FOR CWS Staff: <a href="#">TED Talk: How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime</a></i></p> <p><i>Discussion: select one or two questions from the Learning Guide.</i></p>	<p><i>View video</i></p> <p><i>Facilitate discussion</i></p>
30 - 40 minutes	<p><i>OPTIONAL: View video <a href="#">We Need to Talk About Depression or Depression is a Disease of Civilization</a></i></p> <p><i>Discussion Question: “In what ways might depression manifest in the way people engage in our services? How might that affect the way you serve your clients?”</i></p>	<p><i>View video</i></p> <p><i>Facilitate discussion</i></p>
15 - 30 minutes	<p><i>Select one or more questions from the Learning Guide section: “Applying an understanding of these health conditions to everyday work” and/or “Opportunities for Impact” and facilitate a discussion.</i></p>	<p><i>Facilitate discussion</i></p>
5 minutes	<p>TRANSITION: Introduce topic of Substance Use Disorder</p>	<p>Present</p>
60 – 75 minutes	<p><i>OPTIONAL: Assign a prerequisite video to be viewed prior to attending the training. Select from one of the following:</i></p> <p><i><a href="#">The Disease Concept of Addiction</a></i></p> <p><i><a href="#">The Craving Brain: Neuroscience of Uncontrollable Urges</a></i></p>	<p><i>Independent video viewing</i></p>
10 minutes	<p>Discussion Question: “Have you had direct experience with addiction either in your personal or professional life? What were its impacts?” (may be done as full group, or in diads, or small groups with a report out)</p>	<p>Facilitate discussion</p>
15 minutes	<p><i>OPTIONAL: Facilitate discussion about the content of the prerequisite video.</i></p> <p><i>Discussion Question: “What information in the video was new to you? How did it impact your beliefs or perceptions?”</i></p>	<p><i>Facilitate discussion</i></p>
15 minutes	<p>Provide overview of addiction or substance use disorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Disease model vs. personal choice/failings</li> <li>~ Types of substances</li> <li>~ Brain science regarding addiction</li> <li>~ Prevalence of addiction/substance use disorder</li> </ul>	
5 - 12 minutes	<p>View Video: <a href="#">The Chemistry of Addiction</a> (12 min) or <a href="#">Addiction</a> (6 min) or Susan’s Brain: <a href="#">The Science of Addiction</a> (4½ min)</p>	

10 minutes	Discussion: Select one or more questions from the Learning Guide to discuss in relation to substance use disorder/addiction.	Facilitate discussion
20 minutes	Ask learners for the symptoms of substance use disorder that they might see in their work with clients.  Record them on chart pad or other tool. Add any additional signs/symptoms from the training narrative.  Discuss the impacts these symptoms may have on the person's ability to receive and/or benefit from services.	Present/Facilitate discussion
40 minutes	<i>OPTIONAL: View video - <a href="#">Addiction Neuroscience 101</a></i>  <i>Discussion Question: "What are the implications of information in the video about addiction neuroscience in your work?"</i>	<i>View video</i>  <i>Facilitate discussion</i>
30 - 60 minutes	<i>OPTIONAL: Bring in a guest speaker who can present information about addiction/substance use disorder and how learners can better work with the person experiencing addiction/substance use disorder</i>	<i>Present</i>
5 minutes	TRANSITION: Co-occurrence	
10 minutes	Present or ask learners for scenarios where a person might be experiencing more than one of these health conditions (comorbidity or co-occurrence)  Discuss the challenges this might pose for person's ability to access or benefit from services	Present or facilitate discussion
20 minutes	Discuss: "Providing Caring and Competent Service" section of training narrative.  Provide bulleted points about how to provide caring service via hand outs or slide.  Facilitate role play or discussion identifying what each of the bullets would look like when being applied in service delivery.	Present  Role play and/or  Facilitate discussion
15 - 30 minutes	Select one or more questions from the Learning Guide section: " <i>Applying an understanding of these health conditions to everyday work</i> " and/or " <i>Opportunities for Impact</i> " and facilitate a discussion about:  1. What participants have learned from the training,	Facilitate discussion

	2. How their learning will impact their work, and/or 3. What the implications are for program services?	
5 minutes	Closing/Summary	Close the session

## Module 5: Health Conditions Impacting Individuals and Families

### Learning Guide

*This learning guide is designed to be used by a facilitator (supervisor, trainer or other designated staff) as a tool to guide a one-on-one discussion/debrief with a single employee, or as the basis of a discussion with a group of employees who participated in the learning experience/online training, or to direct learners to further resources.*

*This Guide offers resources for all the different health conditions that may be impacting the individuals or families served by our programs. The trainer or facilitator may choose to address these conditions, in the form of a broad overview, or break them into individual learning sessions depending on need and the audience.*

#### Discussion Questions:

Facilitator Prompt: *“Thinking about what you saw/heard in the ‘Health Conditions Impacting Individuals and Families’ module, let’s talk about what it means to your work.”*

#### Personal reactions

- Do you or any of your friends or family members experience any of these health conditions? If yes, what have you learned about them?
- How might, or has, experiencing one of these conditions yourself affect your life and the way you work?
- What myths or stereotypes about these conditions do you see expressed in the workplace, with your family and friends, or in your community? In what ways does that impact you or the people you serve?
- Did any of your beliefs, thoughts, or assumptions about health, mental health, drug and alcohol use disorder or addiction change based on the information in this video or training?
- What were your key takeaways from this training?

#### Understanding seen and unseen health challenges

- What, if any, of the information contained in the training or associated resources was new to you? How does this new information affect your understanding of some of the conditions that impact the people you serve?
- If you have had direct experience, either yourself or in a family member or friend, with a chronic health problem, mental health issue, or drug or alcohol disorder, have you observed or experienced any of the challenges noted in this training? How has it impacted the person experiencing them? How might those same challenges affect the people you serve?

#### Expanding your understanding of this complex and interesting topic

- Is there anything else you think is important about this topic that you’d like to discuss?
- Is there anything else about this topic you would like to know? *(Refer employee to the appropriate resources listed below based upon the answer to this question.)*

## **Applying learning to practice:**

Discuss the following list of ways that the employee can enhance their practice based on what was learned from the training. Encourage them to identify one or more actions they might take to incorporate learning into the workplace. Offer your own ideas for ways to apply learning to the workplace.

### **Self-reflection activities**

- List specific activities/actions you can add to your practice/work based on your learning.
- Consider how your work directly impacts the lives and well-being of the clients you serve. What does this mean for you?
- What is the link between your work and the issues related to health?

### **Applying an understanding of these health conditions to everyday work**

- How often do you think you encounter clients that experience one of these health conditions?
- How does the information in this video inform the way you think about your work?
- In what ways do you see the services our agency provides support or align with the information you learned? In what ways could services be strengthened or changed to better support/align with what you learned about people with one or more of these health conditions?
- What kinds of signs might you see if a client was experiencing one or more of these health conditions? What would you do if you see them?
- List specific activities/actions you can take to make one change to your practice/work based on your learning.

### **Opportunities for impact**

- If your organization has made changes to programs to improve services for people experiencing one or more of these health challenges, what have the results been? If you don't know, how can you find out?
- If you provide services directly to clients, what specific programs, services, or activities do you engage in that have the biggest impact on individuals or families experiencing one or more of these health conditions?
- In what specific ways can you contribute to a promising future for those experiencing one or more of these health conditions?
- Identify examples in the work you do, or have seen others do, that relate to serving people with one or more of these health conditions and lead a discussion about it in a team meeting, brown bag session, or other group meeting.
- Discuss what you've learned with a co-worker who has not participated in this training experience.

- Discuss ideas you have for improving services to clients one or more of these health conditions with your supervisor.
- Seek opportunities to contribute to projects or processes designed to enhance services to clients experiencing one or more of these health challenges.

### Seeking consultation

- Seek more information from someone in the organization who is well-versed in this topic (see below), or one of the resources below.
- Person(s) in the agency to contact for further information or clarification:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Current training sessions that build on or support this module are:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Other agency resources related to this topic:  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Other ways to reinforce learning

- Lead a discussion related to one of the topics in the training/video that is currently relevant to workers in a team meeting or other group setting.
- Discuss situations/examples of how information contained in the training/video is evidenced in the work of the organization in a team meeting or other group setting.
- Seek out a subject matter expert in the topic and have him/her present at a team meeting or other group setting.

### Resources for further information:

#### Article on chronic illness:

- <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/4062-chronic-illness>

#### Articles on physical disabilities:

- <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-home-health-aide/chapter/working-with-people-with-physical-disabilities/>
- <https://hpi.georgetown.edu/agingsociety/pubhtml/workplace/workplace.html>

#### Article on Mental Illness:

- [https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Career\\_Services\\_Guide\\_WEB\\_May20\\_2015.pdf](https://cica.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Career_Services_Guide_WEB_May20_2015.pdf)

#### Articles on Symptoms and Causes of Mental Illness:

- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/depression/symptoms-causes/syc-20356007>

- <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mental-illness/symptoms-causes/syc-20374968>

#### **Article on Mental Illness Prevalence:**

- <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers>

#### **Articles on Substances and Substance Use Disorder:**

- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/genetics-epigenetics-addiction>
- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/understanding-drug-use-addiction>
- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>
- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/11/study-one-in-eight-american-adults-are-alcoholics/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.4e545da13ceb](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/08/11/study-one-in-eight-american-adults-are-alcoholics/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.4e545da13ceb)
- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4440680/>
- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/marijuana#ref>
- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>

#### **Videos about Physical Illness:**

- Disability: The Truth (28:49 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJ4JOomkyNI>
- Communicating with People with Disabilities (2:16 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hvVSGgm1Rfw>
- Interacting Appropriately with People with Disabilities (3:40 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv1aDEFIXq8>
- TED Talk – Intellectual Disabilities (15:14 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BURbLmQL1BE>
- Being Sick vs. Having a Chronic Illness (1:31 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoRe6JnNQu4>
- TED Talk - Having a Disease Doctors Can't Diagnose (Living with a chronic disease): [https://www.ted.com/talks/jen\\_brea\\_what\\_happens\\_when\\_you\\_have\\_a\\_disease\\_doctors\\_can\\_t\\_diagnose?language=en#t-63871](https://www.ted.com/talks/jen_brea_what_happens_when_you_have_a_disease_doctors_can_t_diagnose?language=en#t-63871)
- Living with a Chronic Disease (11:46 min): [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rr8wliypS\\_g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rr8wliypS_g)

#### **Videos about Mental Illness:**

- Complex Trauma: Understanding and Treatment (51:14 min.): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otxAuHG9hKo>
- Invisible – Uncovering Mental Illness (46:03 min.): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1IP2xGevE0&t=182s>

- TED Talk: Breaking the Stigma and Shame of Mental Illness (10:25 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsRF8xGgbPA>
- What is Schizophrenia? (1:10 min): <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-conditions/schizophrenia>
- Tell Me About Bipolar Disorder (1:00 min): <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-conditions/bipolar-disorder>
- What is Depression? (1:08 min): <https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-conditions/depression>

### **Videos about Substance Use Disorder (Addiction):**

- A Disease of Free Will (21:11 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X1AEvkWxbLE>
- TED Talk: Everything you know about addiction is wrong (14:42 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PY9DclMGxMs>
- Why can't an addict stop using? The Disease Model of Addiction (1 hour, 3 minutes): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l1mjGLqLvxA>
- Addiction Neuroscience 101 (23:29 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwZcPwlRRcc>
- The Craving Brain: Neuroscience of Uncontrollable Urges (1:27:23 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0iL1MN2yCs>
- Addiction (5:41 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ao8L-0nSYzq>
- The Chemistry of Addiction (11:49 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ukFjH9odsXw>
- Trauma and Addiction – A Crash Course (10:50 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=343ORgL3klc>
- American Addiction – The Nation's Struggle with Opioid Addiction (34:26 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nNj89ohoYQ0>
- What is Addiction (3:24 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5sOh4gKPIg>
- The Addicted Brain (5:41 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1G93lz-JK-E>
- Why Do Our Brains Get Addicted: (16:22 min): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mnd2-ai4LCU>