



An Overview of Mental Disorders in Harris County, Texas

The People MHMRA Serves

- *Each month we help more than 15,000 individuals facing mental & developmental challenges (about 3,600 of whom are between the ages of 3 and 17).*
- *Approximately 83 percent are economically disadvantaged.*
- *On any given day, about 2,500 county inmates (25 percent of all inmates) suffer from mental illness, making the Harris County Jail the largest provider of mental health services in the state.*
- *Two out of every three of the county's homeless population has some type of mental illness and one third have a serious mental illness.*
- *Only about 4,500 children who need services receive them, while 14,000 with the same needs receive no services.*
- *MHMRA has a current waiting list of approximately 1,000 adults needing and seeking help who are unable to access care due to inadequate capacity and underfunding.*

Among the most vulnerable members of society are those suffering from mental disorders – and yet they are each full of untapped potential. Our mission is to help those individuals reach their promise, and be acknowledged as contributing, valuable members of their communities.

Mental disorders are generally one of two types: mental illness (MI), such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression; or intellectual & developmental disabilities (IDD), such as Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, or more severe conditions, such as in those individuals with extremely low IQs. In some, a dual diagnosis of MI and IDD may be present.

These conditions are devastating for the affected individuals, and equally traumatic for their families, their friends, and the community at large.

Unfortunately, the community's needs far outweigh the resources available. Texas ranks 49th among states in per capita mental health funding. Harris County ranks among the lowest of Texas counties. A conservative estimate of Harris County residents diagnosed with schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, or major depression is 170,000. Intellectual & developmental disabilities affect an estimated 101,000 Harris County residents.

Besides the often tragic human cost, the consequences of an insufficiently funded system include economic loss, homelessness, an increase in suicide rates, increased (and expensive) juvenile and adult criminal justice system involvement and about a 25-year decrease in life expectancy.

MHMRA is the public safety net to the extent possible. It is the largest developmental disability & behavioral healthcare provider in Texas and one of the largest such organizations in the United States. Harris County is home to one of the most diverse populations in Texas, representing cultures with many unique backgrounds, languages and perceptions of behavioral and developmental health care. More community services and supports are desperately needed.

MHMRA stands as a resource to the community, to provide and coordinate service, to educate the community about mental disorders and to assist other community organizations in learning how to best deliver these vital services. To learn more about MHMRA, please visit www.mhmraharris.org.