The pandemic’s unexpected impact on mental health and substance use

Topics:
1. COVID-19 update
2. One in three people have longer term mental health or neurological symptoms
3. Increase in diagnosis of anxiety and mood disorders
4. Alcohol use on the rise (dominant substance that plagues Maine)
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Ask us questions – give us feedback – this hour is for you

- Please use the chat function to ask your questions at anytime.
Latest on COVID-19
• This is the punchline.

• Dr. Shah (May 14): “Getting vaccinated is the best way to protect yourself and your community from COVID-19.”

• Governor Mills (May 14): “Please don’t wait. Get your shot now.”
More About Maine

Hot spots in Maine

This map shows a rolling average of daily cases for the past week. This is the best sign of hot spots.

Maine Coronavirus Map: Tracking the Trends - Mayo Clinic
Other Factoids

• Pfizer vaccines ages 12 and up.
• Moderna and J&J vaccines 18 and up.
• Approximately 50% of Maine’s population is fully vaccinated.
• Maine.gov/covid19/vaccines or call 1-888-445-4111
• Effective May 24, 2021
  • fully vaccinated people do not need to wear facial coverings indoors.
  • lift all capacity limits and requirements to physically distance in all public outdoor settings.
  • lift all capacity limits in public indoor venues and physical distancing requirements, except in settings where people are eating or drinking and therefore would be removing their face covering – such as indoor restaurants, bars, dining areas in camps or in congregate living facilities, and break rooms.

Maine to Adopt U.S. CDC’s New COVID-19 Guidance | Office of Governor Janet T. Mills
The global strategy to end this pandemic is to achieve herd immunity.

Herd immunity is achieved by vaccinating 70-85% of the people.

Vaccinate.
COVID-19 infections and long-term neurological symptoms
Up to 30% of individuals who had symptomatic COVID-19 report neurologic deficits. These Include:

- Memory Loss
- Brain Fog—difficulty concentrating or thinking
- Seizures
- Strokes
- Neuropathy—prolonged numbness/tingling
Unknown at this time but it seems to be spread across populations

• We would expect that those with prior brain injuries are more susceptible, such as:
  • Traumatic Brain Injury
  • Stroke
  • Critically ill
    (especially if needing a ventilator)
Long Term Affects

Aside from permanent conditions like post-stroke brain damage

• A third of people fully recovered
• A third lingering affects eventually improved
• A third continue with persistent symptoms
Increase in diagnosis of anxiety and mood disorders
General Mental Health Data

• 1 in 5 adults have a diagnosable mental health condition

• Mental Health Conditions include:
  • Anxiety, Depression, Substance Use Disorder, Bipolar Disorder, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Schizophrenia, and Suicidal Thoughts (among others)

• 46 percent meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition sometime in their life
  • half will develop conditions by age of 14

• 56% do not receive mental health treatment

• 21% of adults with mental illness report they try and can't get treatment

Mental illnesses: impact a person’s mood, thinking, feelings, and behavior.

Past Year Prevalence of Any Mental Illness Among U.S. Adults (2019)
Data Courtesy of SAMHSA

Source: Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication - PubMed (nih.gov)
• Stigma is when someone, or even yourself, views a person in a negative way just because they have a mental health condition or substance use disorder.

• Dispelling false ideas about mental illnesses and addictions helps reject stigmatizing stereotypes.
Prevalence of Mental Illness During the Pandemic

In January 2021, 41% of adults reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder.

During the pandemic, a larger than average share of young adults (ages 18-24) report symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder (56%).

During the pandemic, adults in households with job loss or lower incomes report higher rates of symptoms of mental illness (53% vs. 32%).

Women with children are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder than men with children (49% vs. 40%).

The pandemic has disproportionately affected the health of communities of color.

Essential workers are more likely to report symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder (42% vs. 30%).
Awareness is key

The below symptoms may indicate that someone needs additional support:

• Difficulty sleeping or concentrating.
• Fear and worry about their health or the health of loved ones.
• Changes in sleeping or eating patterns.
• Feelings of sadness or grief.
• Excessive irritability or impatience.
• Increased startle reflex.
• Increased use of alcohol, tobacco or other substances.
• Difficulty setting priorities or making decisions.
• Worsening of mental health conditions.
Available Resources for Employers

We're here to help.

StrengthenME offers free stress management and resiliency resources to anyone in Maine experiencing stress reactions to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

For statewide assistance call:

📞 207-221-8198

Every day 8am to 8pm

National Alliance on Mental Illness

Employee Assistance Program
1-800-769-9819
Creating a Culture of Acceptance

Employers can change the climate of fear regarding mental health in the workplace.

- Mental health conditions cost employers more than $100 billion and 217 million lost workdays each year
- By investing in mental health care for workers, employers can increase productivity and employee retention
Alcohol use on the rise
Alcohol Use on the rise

- 3rd leading preventable death in the United States
- Alcohol is the most widely misused substance in Maine by youth and adults.
- Excessive Drinking in Maine compared to US:
  - Men: 24% / 22.7%
  - Females: 16% / 14%
- Excess drinking in Maine based on Income:
  - less than $25,000 15% / 13%
  - $25-49,999 19% / 16%
  - $50-74,999 22% / 20%
  - $75,000 or more 21% / 23%
How does this impact the workplace?

All impacting Financials

- Lateness and absenteeism
- Safety concerns
- Bad behavior or poor discipline
- Adverse effects on company image and customer relations
- Resentment among team members
How does it present and what to do?

Red Flags:

• Falling asleep at work or tired all the time
• Frequent mistakes
• Disappearing or frequent breaks
• Mood swings
• Being tardy or call outs often on Mondays or Fridays.
• In this time of Zoom, no longer on camera and volume off

How Much Alcohol Is Healthy?

According to the National Institutes of Health, in the United States, one "standard" drink contains roughly 14 grams of pure alcohol, which is found in one of the following:

- 12 fl oz of regular beer
- 8-9 fl oz of malt liquor (shaken in a 12 oz glass)
- 5 fl oz of table wine
- 1.5 fl oz shot of 80-proof spirits ("hard liquor"—whiskey, gin, rum, vodka, tequila, etc.)

The percent of "pure" alcohol, expressed here as alcohol by volume (alcohol), varies by beverage.

www.PulseOS.com
What can you do?

❖ Consult HR or an employment attorney.
❖ Familiarize yourself with the company benefits plan.
❖ Drug free workplace - clear expectations with written policies
❖ Have compassion and resources at the ready
❖ Help reduce Stigma
❖ Educate on how substance use impacts health, productivity, and teams

Additional Resources:

• Northern Light Acadia Hospital 207.949.4634
• https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/virtual-recovery.shtml
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Tools you can use:

https://northernlighthealth.org/Resources/Safe-Return-to-Business
Join us Thursday, June 3: Vaccine Hesitancy – Practical advice for parents

Topics:

- Vaccine awareness
- Attitudes and influences affecting youth
- Age-appropriate talking points
- Constructive solutions for parents who disagree with vaccines
- The role of providers and teachers
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