PROBLEM

What is the problem for Dallas County?

A lack of culturally-competent services impedes access to mental health care for ethnic and racial minority groups.

Why is this a problem for Dallas County?

Dallas County is among the more diverse counties in the country. Of the six major mental health providers in the community, all provide Spanish-speaking services, though to a varying degree (i.e. solely medication management versus more comprehensive rehabilitation services). Only three agencies provide services in other languages.

What needs to be done to alleviate this problem?

There is a need to focus attention in order to develop, evaluate, and identify resources to meet the mental health care needs of the county’s diverse population. The goal of achieving a culturally-competent mental health care system in a diverse society can only be accomplished if the system includes well-trained, culturally-competent providers and agency personnel. Cultural competency requires that knowledge of the customs and healing traditions of each consumer’s culture be used in evaluation, diagnosis, and treatment decisions. Treatment must be tailored to address the choices consumers make based on their beliefs, values, and traditions. To promote cultural competency, providers must offer materials and literature in a consumer’s language, provide on-going training to staff, and recruit multiethnic and multiracial staff.

Impact for Dallas County

Culturally-competent mental health services will encourage more people to access mental health services and reduce the social costs associated with untreated mental illness. Treatment outcomes will also be improved for culturally-diverse individuals with access to culturally-competent services.

SUPPORTING STATISTICS

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Dallas County’s population includes 26.4% Hispanic or Latino, 19.1% Black or African-American, and 4.1% Asian.