



Oral Health: An Overlooked but Critical Recovery- Oriented Service

A SEACOAST PERSPECTIVE

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Whole Person

- ▶ As complex beings it should be no surprise that there is overlap between our physical, oral and mental health

Serious Mental Illness and Oral Health... ..if truth be told

- ▶ The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry 2016:
 - ▶ 40 years of data are available... covering the disparity of oral health for people with mental illness....yet it remains a forgotten problem...
- ▶ US Surgeon General's Report 2000:
 - ▶ The mouth is a window to wellbeing...showing signs of nutritional deficiencies and serving as an early warning system for disease, general infection and stress

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- ▶ Review by Dr. Kisely Hooman Baghaie published in 2017 found dental patients with substance use disorders have more tooth decay and periodontal disease than the general population, but are less likely to receive dental care.

How does drug use affect oral health?

- ▶ Dry mouth
- ▶ Clenching or grinding of teeth
- ▶ Chemical erosion
- ▶ Malnutrition
- ▶ Poor oral hygiene
- ▶ Inflammation

How do Oral Health Issues affect physical health?

- ▶ Coronary heart disease
- ▶ Stroke
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Respiratory disease

Social Impact of Poor Oral Health and Addiction

Personal relationships/interactions

Professional opportunities

Higher rate of absenteeism

Barriers to Oral Healthcare

- ▶ Despite the known overall health implications of oral health... NH Medicaid is one of 12 states that covers 2 or fewer common oral health procedures:
 - ▶ Limited Oral Evaluation
 - ▶ Tooth Extraction
- ▶ 24 States offer 10 to 13 common oral health procedures
- ▶ Over 4 million people visited the ED for dental care costing 2.1 billion dollars (T. Wall 2013)

Why have this conversation now?

- ▶ The issue is not new, but the numbers of individuals impacted has grown
- ▶ Improved oral health can lead to improved self esteem, increased ability to find a job and have a positive impact on recovery
- ▶ Increasing partnerships and integration of care makes this the right time to focus on making progress

What action can we take?

- ▶ Mental Health First Aid Training
- ▶ Establish/expand practice of oral health assessment and referral by SUD Treatment and Recovery Providers and Dental Providers: needs to be a two way street
- ▶ Work collaboratively to decrease or eliminate barriers to access to adult dental care across all communities

Thank you!

