

Beth Lawson - StarCare

What do people usually experience when seeking out mental health services?

00:06

When trying to get care for mental illness, person might have a variety of experiences, which is one of the reasons why the partnership has come together to help educate both the community citizens, the community health providers, and then all of the concerned citizens. If a person doesn't really know anything about human services or mental health services, they might be met with just door after door after door calling one place getting sent to another place. We're really hoping to avoid that for people to help people navigate through what can be a very complicated system, when they are themselves not feeling well. And so for us, we are looking at having a single point of access where you can call star care. You can ask a number of questions; we'll ask you a number of questions and then we can help direct you.

What does StarCare do?

01:02

StarCare, I think, is one of the unsung heroes in the community and that we serve over 6000 people a year. We serve all the way from one zip code here in Lubbock, to 61 counties in West Texas, all the way from the Oklahoma border down to the border of Mexico. We do services for people with mental health issues, substance use disorder, intellectual disabilities, we have a big program for people who are aging and frail people who want to not live in a nursing home but need some extra attention and extra support. We have VetStar which is a big Veterans Program. And in addition to that, we are the administrative agency for all of the HIV services in the western portion of Texas.

Why is mental health important for your overall health?

01:53

Mental health as a priority to a person's overall well-being just as any other health of their of their body, the brain is absolutely a part of the body and not separate from it. And so well we know that the transition and the evolution of care for things like cancer and health and heart disease have really evolved over the last 20 or 30 years we'll have mental health is just really on the cusp of people understanding its importance, we know that a person's disposition and brain health is just as important to their overall wellness.

Why should mental health be a priority in our community?

02:31

We know that there are costs to untreated health care and that is whether it's a sick day for a physical ailment, or whether it's a sick day because a person has depression, and they can't really face the day at a worksite we also know that employers are often faced with absenteeism or tardiness or issues related to substance use disorders that might then negatively impact his or her business and the bottom line there. And so with the happiness and the health of a whole entire person, they're much better suited to be a provider and a worker and a community member.

How do we help people to better understand what mental illness is?

03:15

Mental illness is mysterious to a lot of people. But let me just be frank with you. One in four people suffers with some kind of a mental health issue, whether that's anxiety, depression, certainly Social fears. We know that serious mental illness is less prevalent than just your generalized anxiety or your depressive disorders. But we all know that in our world that you have come into contact with or you have someone in your family who everybody knows, there's just something about Uncle Joe are something that this is about aunt mami that maybe, maybe they're just not like everyone else. Maybe they don't come out of their bedroom, maybe they won't leave the house, maybe they cry a lot. Maybe they drink a little bit too much. What we know is that mental illness has carried with it a stigma for years and years and years that it is a moral flaw and a character issue when in fact, we know it's a brain disorder.

How does StarCare help people to better understand mental illness?

04:19

One of our main priorities in this collaborative is that we bring mental health to the forefront and help people understand demystify everything that's involved with mental health care. And helping people understand that the only tragedy in mental health is a person suffering without treatment.

What are some other services StarCare offers?

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To expand a little bit about what StarCare does, not just do we provide overall generalized services, but we are a navigator. We help people find services, whether it's us as a provider, or whether it's another community provider, like the Health Sciences Center, or Covenant Hospital, for example. We provide screenings and assessment and we can just really help put some, some words to what people may be feeling or families might be struggling with. But in addition to that, we also provide a 24 hour a day seven day a week crisis line. It's there are times where people don't really know where to turn and the crisis is becoming more and more life threatening. And so we encourage people to reach out to us because we do go mobile. And we do have our 24 hour access to our mobile crisis services. And so we can be reached immediately 24 hours a day seven days a week by calling 806-740-1414.

How do you feel about the mental health collaborative?

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We are so fortunate to live in a community that prioritizes the whole health of a person and all of its citizens. And with the other five community partners, we just couldn't be more blessed. We do know that one of the results of the meadows mental health needs assessment was that Lubbock has a real spirit of collaboration. And really what we need to do next is a spirit of coordination. And so I am confident beyond belief in our ability to get that done and to actually expand care in such a way that people have access to very meaningful care at the right time and quickly.