Mental health - Covid-19 and beyond

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“We all have mental health”

- About 1 in 4 have a current mental health difficulty
- Lifetime risk approx. 3/4
- Risk and protective factors determine our positions on the spectrum during our lives
Recent trends in public mental health

- Gradual increase in prevalence of mental health difficulties
- Biggest rise among young women
- Linked to wider social & economic inequalities

Children from the poorest 20% of households are four times as likely to have serious mental health difficulties by the age of 11 as those from the wealthiest 20% (Morrison Gutman et al, 2015)
Surveys show sharp rise in emotional and psychological distress during lockdown, followed by gradual reduction.

Rising prevalence of common mental health conditions (anxiety & depression) and coping mechanisms including alcohol misuse.

Worsening situation for people with existing mental health problems.
Traumatic impacts of coronavirus

- Covid-19 is a collective trauma (it’s happening to all of us)
- But we’re *not* all experiencing it the same ways
- Impacts of trauma likely to be greatest and longest on those worst affected:
  - By the virus
  - By the lockdown
  - By the recession
- Psychological impacts also likely to be greater for those with pre-existing traumatic experiences & facing systemic discrimination and exclusion
Groups facing higher risks to mental health

- Children, young people and young adults
- People with long-term conditions
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities
- People with existing mental health difficulties
- People on low incomes and most precarious livelihoods
- Older people, especially in care homes
- Prisoners
Projection of mental health need relating to Covid-19 and how it compares with the trajectory of the virus itself.
Scenarios of mental health need relating to Covid-19 and how they could compare with the trajectory of the virus itself

**Scenario 1: A single wave of Covid-19**

- People vs Time
- Mental health need
- Single wave of Covid-19

**Scenario 2: Two or more waves of Covid-19**

- People vs Time
- Mental health need
- Waves of Covid-19
Tsunami or rising tide?

Higher need for mental health support:
- Up to 10 million people will need support
- Two-thirds of these are people with existing mental health problems
- 1.5 million children and young people

But likely to grow over time:
- Low and slow help-seeking among many of those worst affected
- Impact of recession won’t be immediate and may be prolonged
What would help?

- Sustain financial safety nets, especially for the most vulnerable and precarious
- Support schools, colleges and workplaces to create trauma-informed spaces & approaches
- Tailor employment programmes for young people & support millennial generation
- Proactive mental health support for highest risk groups
- Support people with ongoing mental health needs including physical health & finances
Effective local partnership working

- Enabling VCS staff and volunteers to work safely alongside NHS, social care and public health colleagues
- Valuing peer supporters, advocates, welfare advice workers
- Supporting smaller organisations that work with groups with higher risks to mental health
- Maintaining safeguarding to protect people at risk of abuse or exploitation
- Valuing organisations that provide key functions such as supported housing, advocacy and support for children, young people and young adults
Reports and resources

- Briefing for local councils: http://www.mentalhealthchallenge.org.uk/briefings-for-councillors/
- Understanding local needs: https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/forecast-modelling-toolkit
Thank you
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