

# A Community Collaboration Toolkit for Pennsylvania Providers

## Mental Health Resources and Referrals

### Barriers to Accessing Care

#### Barriers to Accessing MH Treatment

Approximately 7 percent of the U.S. population age 18 and older in a given year is affected by depression. Women are twice as likely to experience depression. Only a small percentage of these women seek professional help and engage in mental health treatment services. The percentage among low-income women and women of ethnic minorities is even lower. The most common barriers are the following:

- Lack of health insurance or insufficient insurance coverage
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of transportation
- Stigma
- Lack of support of family members
- Cultural practices, beliefs, and language barriers
- Lack of awareness (depressive symptoms are part of their reality and “normal life”)/ knowledge
- Lack of knowledge about services
- Fear of losing custody of children
- Reluctance of taking medication (fear of side effects)
- Lack of mental health treatment resources

Within the last years there are increasing efforts to address barriers to treatment. New approaches are developed to adapt existing traditional treatment forms to the specific individual needs, preferences, and culture of the target population. Examples are home-visiting programs, community-based mental health services, integration of on-site childcare, and offering services at community-based locations, such as community centers, schools, and churches. Also the referral process for mental health services has to be adjusted and improved to increase the success of accessing mental health services.

*Kessler R.C. et al. (2005). Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of twelve-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). Archives of General Psychiatry, 2005 Jun;62(6):617-27.*

*Kessler R.C. et al. (2003). The epidemiology of major depressive disorder: results from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). Journal of the American Medical Association, 2003; Jun 18;289(23):3095-105.*

*Olfson M. et al. (2002). National trends in the outpatient treatment of depression. JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association. 287, 203-209. ■*