



Integration Care Model: Behavioral Health

Depression or anxiety may impact a person's ability to seek medical or dental treatment. Past trauma can also make a person feel uncomfortable visiting a health provider. Providers can practice trauma-informed care and better understand the connections between medication, adverse experiences, and oral health to ensure a patient is treated appropriately[13].

Factors to Consider

- **Medication Side Effects:** Some medications cause side effects like dry mouth, which can increase the risk of oral complications. By adding medication questions on patient intake forms, health providers can address side effects and monitor for problems.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Individuals who have experienced trauma may be more likely to engage in behaviors that affect oral and overall health; they may also feel vulnerable receiving oral exams. Trauma-informed care training and resources can help providers in all settings build trust and adapt their approach.
- **Measuring Improvement:** Consider both qualitative and quantitative measurements to assess your integration plan's success, like the number of depression screenings in dental visits, the number of trauma-informed care training opportunities for providers, the number of bi-directional referrals with mental health providers, and patient satisfaction.



Case Study: Leadership as Champions

When a health center began a care integration program, their medical and dental teams were siloed. The clinic administrator and medical director set a goal for medical and dental staff to regularly meet and collaborate on patient care. Eventually, leadership saw a need to loop in the pharmaceutical team to better understand medication-related side effects. With the clinic administration providing leadership and oversight, the clinicians were able to streamline the patient experience and ensure that all providers were collaborating to address medication-related side effects.

3x

U.S. adults with severe mental illness are 3 times as likely to lose all of their teeth from untreated dental disease compared to the general population



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Practical Examples: Integrating Care Across the Clinic

Pharmacists have an important role to play in patient education.

- 1** During a well visit at the local community health center, Dan's nurse performs a mental health screening which reveals Dan shows signs of depression. Dan's physician prescribes an anti-depressant.
- 2** When he goes to the center's pharmacy to get the prescription filled, the pharmacist tells Dan that his medication may cause dry mouth and suggests he increase his water intake and chew sugar free gum to combat symptoms, and be sure to schedule a dental appointment. The pharmacist walks Dan to the health center's front desk to schedule a dental visit.
- 3** When Dan visits the health center dentist a few weeks later, his dentist views his EHR and sees he is on an antidepressant. Dan's dentist performs a thorough exam and notes symptoms of dry mouth. Dan remembers his pharmacist mentioning the potential oral side effects.
- 4** Dan's dentist prescribes a mouth rinse to help alleviate his dry mouth symptoms. The information and support from Dan's pharmacist reinforces his trust in this treatment plan.

