

**CENTER FOR MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES DEFINITIONS OF
“ADULTS WITH A SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS”
AND
“CHILDREN WITH A SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE”**

The Center for Mental Health Services (CMHS) established final definitions in 1993 for the target populations that would be serviced by funds from the Community Mental Health Services Block Grant.

These definitions will apply directly to those county programs using these funds. Funds may be used only to provide services to mental health consumers who meet the following definitions. The Department is responsible to assure the CMHS that these funds are appropriately used.

Definition of Adults with a Serious Mental Illness

Pursuant to Section 1912(c) of the Public Health Service Act, as amended by Public Law 102-321, "adults with a serious mental illness" are persons: (1) age 18 and over and (2) who currently have, or at any time during the past year, had a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified within DSM-IV or their ICD-9-CM equivalent (and subsequent revisions) with the exception of DSM-IV "V" codes, substance use disorders, and developmental disorders which are excluded, unless they co-occur with another diagnosable serious mental illness (3) that has resulted in functional impairment which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.

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Definitions of Children & Adolescents with Severe Emotional Disturbance

Pursuant to Section 1911(c) of the Public Health Service Act, "children with a serious emotional disturbance" are (1) from birth up to age 18 and (2) who currently have, or at any time during the last year, had a diagnosable mental, behavioral or emotional disorder of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified within DSM-III-R that resulted in functional impairment which substantially interferes with or limits the child's role or functioning in family, school, or community activities.

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