

# Role of Clinical Pharmacist in Improving Mental Health Literacy among Adolescents

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## ABSTRACT

Adolescence is a critical period for mental health development, yet mental health literacy among these demographic remains alarmingly low. This article explores the pivotal role of clinical pharmacists in improving mental health literacy among adolescents. It begins by defining mental health literacy and outlining the current challenges, including stigma, misinformation and a lack of resources. The evolving role of clinical pharmacists in mental health care is examined, emphasizing their unique position to educate and support adolescents. Through pharmacist-led educational programs, counselling services and community outreach, clinical pharmacists can significantly enhance adolescents' understanding of mental health issues, leading to improved treatment adherence and better long-term mental health outcomes. The article also highlights the challenges faced by clinical pharmacists and identifies opportunities for expanding their role in mental health care. The conclusion calls for greater integration of clinical pharmacists into mental health literacy programs and suggests areas for future research and practice development.

**Keywords:** Clinical Pharmacist, Mental Health Literacy, Adolescents, Mental Health Education, Stigma Reduction.

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## INTRODUCTION

Mental health literacy involves recognising, managing and preventing mental health concerns. Teens' social, emotional and psychological transformations make literacy essential. Identity, peer relationships and intellectual and social resiliency change during adolescence. Depression, anxiety and stress are more common with these features.<sup>1</sup> Teens have many mental health difficulties, but few know how to identify or treat them. Increase mental health knowledge in this group to minimise stigma, increase peer support and encourage young people to seek help. Researchers estimate that 20% of teens have a mental health disorder, which is highly high. Youth mental healths difficulties like depression, anxiety, eating disorders and self-harm are common yet often undiagnosed. These issues affect academic performance, social relationships and quality of life.<sup>2</sup> Due to a lack of mental health knowledge, teens are more prone to put off treatment and develop major mental health concerns. Mental illness stigma makes young people even more reluctant to talk about their difficulties and seek help.

## ROLE OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Medical professionals, especially clinical pharmacists, can boost adolescent mental health literacy. Educators, psychologists and psychiatrists have led mental health literacy projects. However, clinical pharmacist' patient-centred approach, regular patient interaction and medication administration competence are gaining recognition. Clinical pharmacist can assist teens understand mental health, how to spot symptoms and where to obtain care. Clinical pharmacist who practises mental health literacy can help adolescents get early intervention and improved outcomes.<sup>3</sup> This will connect teens to mental health treatments. This essay discusses clinical pharmacist' rising role in teen mental health literacy. It highlights Clinical pharmacist's unique position in healthcare and their many ways to help vulnerable communities improve their mental health literacy. This article examines clinical pharmacist' practices, challenges and promise to improve adolescent mental health.

## MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY: A CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

Mental health literacy involves recognising, managing and preventing mental health issues. Recognising mental health disorders, understanding their causes and risk factors, knowing self-help and professional help and having attitudes that encourage recognition and help-seeking are all crucial. Mental health literacy involves understanding and managing one's own and others'



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mental health. Developmental changes put adolescents at risk for mental health issues, making mental health literacy even more important. Mentally well-informed teens can better regulate their emotions and behaviours, recognise when they or their friends need help and work towards a culture that is less judgemental of mental illness. Information can lead to early intervention, better mental health treatment and improved well-being.<sup>4</sup> Despite the importance of mental health literacy, research suggests that many teens lack it. Teens may comprehend depression and anxiety, but schizophrenia and bipolar disorder may be less clear to them, according to research. Young individuals with mental health difficulties may not know where to get help or what treatments are available. Teen mental health literacy appears to be lacking, according to the findings. A study of multiple schools found that just a small percentage of students could identify serious depression or where to get expert help. Ignorance raises the risk of long-term mental health difficulties, intensifies symptoms and delays seeking assistance.

## BARRIERS TO MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

Mental illness stigma is a huge barrier. Teens fear about stigma if they admit to mental health difficulties. Fewer young people will seek mental health care or feel comfortable discussing it.

Many places lack mental health education materials. Schools provide most of adolescents' education, but they may lack the resources and expertise to offer mental health literacy programs.<sup>5</sup>

Peers, popular culture and social media can misinform adolescents about mental health. This misinformation about mental illness may lead to incorrect responses to mental health issues.

Culture and socioeconomic status also affect mental health perceptions. Lower socioeconomic groups may have limited access to mental health education and treatments and certain cultures may not recognise mental health issues as medical disorders.

Parents' emotional health affects their kids. Children whose parents downplay mental health education are more likely to lack mental health literacy.<sup>6</sup>

These obstacles must be overcome to improve teens' mental health literacy. Expanding school-based mental health education, fostering open discourse about mental health and providing reliable information can help young people overcome these barriers and improve their mental health literacy.

## CLINICAL PHARMACISTS IN MENTAL HEALTH

Clinical pharmacists have helped patients follow their prescriptions for years. Along with providing pharmacological knowledge and drug therapy management, they traditionally prevent medication errors and ensure patients understand their

prescriptions.<sup>7</sup> Clinical pharmacist work with doctors, nurses and other medical professionals to provide the best treatment for patients with long-term health conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure and heart disease. Hospital healthcare teams depend on them for input during rounds, medication interactions and patient response. Clinical pharmacist' roles have changed, notably in mental health. As mental health becomes more important, clinical pharmacist are increasingly involved in patient education, drug management and mental health therapy. Psychiatric drugs have complex adverse effects and pharmacological interactions, making careful monitoring essential.

Clinical pharmacist now counsel patients on drug use, side effects and mental health difficulties in one-on-one sessions. Interdisciplinary mental health teams employ their experience to create complete treatment plans.<sup>8</sup> Clinical pharmacist check for mental health illnesses, determine pharmacological causes and counsel patients on lifestyle changes. Mental health literacy programs are expanding. These efforts minimise mental health stigma, enhance symptom awareness and disprove treatment myths. Clinical pharmacist improves mental health literacy in their communities through teaching and therapy.

## UNIQUE POSITION OF PHARMACISTS

Clinical pharmacists are often the most accessible healthcare professionals. Pharmacists and patients often discuss minor health issues, fill prescriptions and recommend over-the-counter medications. Pharmacotherapy specialist can teach patients about mental health in a familiar setting by staying in touch.

Pharmacists are always trusted professionals. When discussing mental health, trust is crucial. Patients may feel more comfortable discussing mental health difficulties with Pharmacotherapy specialist than other medical providers due to the lack of shame.<sup>9</sup>

With their extensive drug knowledge, clinical pharmacist provides useful insights into mental health treatment pharmacology. They can inform patients about psychotropic medicine's negative effects and benefits, its mechanisms and the importance of taking prescriptions as prescribed. This understanding helps patients make informed mental health care decisions.

Clinical pharmacists also work with primary care doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists. Partnership lets them satisfy patients' physical and emotional health needs concurrently. Pharmacists coordinate mental health care and ensure the safe use of medications, which are often paired with therapy.<sup>10</sup>

Clinical pharmacist thrives in community education and engagement. By giving accurate information, supporting early detection and holding seminars, Clinical pharmacists may minimise mental illness stigma, demystify mental health and encourage help-seeking in public health efforts, school programs and community workshops.

Last, clinical pharmacists are increasingly involved in mental health literacy and pharmacological management. Their credibility, expertise and accessibility make them excellent for patient education, treatment oversight and community mental health improvement.

## **INTERVENTIONS BY CLINICAL PHARMACISTS TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY**

### **Pharmacist-led Educational Programs**

Pharmacy education has focused on teens' mental health literacy. These programs encourage youth to detect mental health disorders, seek care and minimise stigma. School curriculums may incorporate mental health literacy initiatives or workshops. This mental health program teaches kids through exercises, discussions and activities. Clinical pharmacists can reach youths at their convenience by providing educational content via apps or the internet.<sup>11</sup> These mental health programs teach using quizzes, movies and instructions. Pharmacotherapy specialist offers these classes to help youngsters with mental health issues. These initiatives teach youth to critically evaluate mental health, dispel myths and provide lifelong information.

### **Counselling and Support Services**

For youth, clinical pharmacist offers group training, individual counselling and support groups. Teens can discuss medication challenges, mental health issues and get assistance in confidential therapy sessions. While in the pharmacy, teens can learn about their mental health issues, how their medications work and why they must take them.<sup>12</sup> They can answer questions about drug combinations, side effects and mental health lifestyles. Pharmacotherapy specialist use motivational interviewing to help teens discuss mental health and take charge of therapy. Teens need one-on-one time to build trust and get mental health care.

### **Community Outreach and Awareness Campaigns**

Community and clinic Pharmacotherapy specialist are essential to teen mental health awareness. Seminars, workshops and public lectures are part of community mental health education.<sup>13</sup> Community centres, youth groups and schools can partner with Pharmacotherapy specialist to teach families and teens about mental health. These programs may include mental health presenters, interactive exercises and Q&A sessions with Pharmacotherapy specialist and other specialists. Pharmacists can promote mental health awareness using social media, posters and publications. These projects aim to increase mental health care access, reduce stigma and promote open discourse. When scientists join in community events that encourage mental health literacy, adolescents feel empowered to take charge of their mental health.

## **Collaboration with Schools and Healthcare Providers**

Clinical pharmacists are crucial to interdisciplinary mental health literacy programs. Pharmacotherapy specialist can better meet adolescents' needs by working with other healthcare providers, schools and mental health professionals to create customised programs.<sup>14</sup> School Pharmacotherapy specialist can help educators, counsellors and administrators incorporate mental health lessons into school curricula. They can help teachers understand mental health issues and support kids. Pharmacists and school nurses can supervise mental health medication-taking students. Pharmacotherapy specialist can collaborate with psychologists, psychiatrists and paediatricians to provide a comprehensive treatment strategy for mentally ill teens. Joint consultations, collaborative decision-making and frequent communication can support the teen's mental health goals throughout treatment. Pharmacists help teenagers improve their mental health literacy and access to care by fostering collaboration with other experts. We must collaborate across disciplines to improve youth mental health literacy.

## **CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **Challenges in Implementation**

Clinical pharmacist lacks mental health-specific training, which hinders teenage mental health literacy. Although Clinical pharmacists well-versed in drugs and health, not all have mental health training, especially for teens. Due to this mismatch, Clinical pharmacists may lack the ability to educate patients and manage mental health issues. Unfortunately, not all Pharmacotherapy specialist have the means to keep up with the ever-changing mental health treatment landscape and adolescent mental health concerns. In fast-paced environments, Clinical pharmacists dispense prescriptions, counsel patients and manage administrative tasks. Time restrictions might make mental health literacy projects, especially those needing in-depth interactions or full training, difficult to prioritise.<sup>15</sup> Due to competing constraints, Pharmacotherapy specialist may struggle to engage kids on mental health issues, limiting their therapy.

Institutional constraints like absence of healthcare group or school support may make mental health literacy difficult for clinical pharmacist. New healthcare initiatives or pharmacist engagement may attract resistance. Funding and availability to school-aged teenagers may potentially hinder mental health literacy programs. Due to these restrictions, Pharmacotherapy specialist may not help as many people as they want. Stigma is a big issue for mental health literacy programs. Teens, families and healthcare practitioners may stigmatise mental health, making it challenging to engage them in education. Teens may be wary of scientists when discussing mental health issues for fear of stigma, ignorance, or judgement. Overcoming these long-held ideas requires culturally aware communication, perseverance and understanding the other culture.

## Opportunities for Future Research and Practice

Mental health literacy is an area where clinical pharmacist can improve. Future research may include clinical pharmacists working alongside psychologists, psychiatrists and others in innovative mental health care approaches. Together, we can include mental health literacy in a comprehensive teen treatment strategy to improve care. Pharmacotherapy specialist can support mental health literacy programs with digital tools and telemedicine to save time and resources. This could increase reach. Pharmacist training programs for teenagers could fill the mental health training gap. These programs may cover mental health issues, psychopharmacology, counselling and teen mental health dialogue.<sup>16</sup> Certification programs or continuing education courses on mental health literacy might help Clinical pharmacist get more involved.

Pharmacist-led mental health literacy programs for adolescents need more research. Studying the efficacy of group sessions, individual therapy and community service may help designers create innovative programs. Studies on the interventions' long-term effects-such as increased help-seeking, decreased stigma and improved mental health literacy-can boost Pharmacotherapy specialist' responsibilities in mental health therapy. Pharmacists, teachers, mental health professionals and community groups can collaborate better. Using everyone's skills, these groups can strengthen mental health literacy programs. Teens need integrated training, resources and care to receive regular and comprehensive mental health support. This will reduce institutional barriers. Clinical pharmacist role in mental health care can be promoted through advocacy, creating new practise opportunities.<sup>17</sup> They can take a larger role in mental health with supporting frameworks created through policy reform to raise awareness and reduce stigma. Pharmacy professionals can improve mental health treatment by advocating for their involvement in policy and program development.

## IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

### Short-term and Long-term Benefits

#### *Short-term Benefits*

We can assist more teens manage with mental health concerns by boosting awareness of their signs and early intervention. With this awareness, fewer teens will go untreated for mental health illnesses and those who do will seek treatment sooner. Young people can reduce their anxiety by distinguishing between mood swings and mental health disorders with more knowledge. Mental health stigma can be reduced by educational awareness. When emotional and mental health difficulties are normalised, adolescents are more inclined to talk to friends and doctors. Candour is necessary to create welcoming communities where teens feel comfortable asking for help.<sup>18</sup>

Pharmacists who participate in mental health literacy initiatives may encourage adolescents to seek medical help. Clinical pharmacists are trustworthy and easy to talk to, so adolescents feel comfortable discussing mental health difficulties with them. Mental health literacy programs that promote treatment completion increase patient compliance. Understanding the rationale for medicine and other treatment interventions helps teenagers stick to them and improves short-term health.

### Long-term Benefits

Mental health literacy may improve teen mental health overall. Understanding early intervention and continued therapy is crucial to preventing mental health issues from worsening. Teens who receive mental health education build resilience and better coping mechanisms for stress and emotional issues. By learning the signs and symptoms and accessing supports early, adolescents can better manage mental health emergencies.<sup>19</sup> This preventative method reduces acute care scenarios including hospitalisations and emergency interventions. Early mental health therapy reduces long-term risks including self-harm and suicide.

Teens who participate in pharmacist-led mental health literacy programs can have better mental health care experiences throughout their lives. Staying involved can improve chronic disease management and enhance mental health as we age. Academic performance and relationships are linked to mental health literacy. Mentally healthy teens are more likely to be active, have good friends and do well in school. Long-term, these benefits reduce mental health issues by enhancing enjoyment and success.

## CONCLUSION

This research examines clinical pharmacist's critical role in improving adolescent's mental health literacy, an overlooked area of healthcare. We started by explaining mental health literacy and why young people should understand it. This research addresses stigma, misinformation and resource shortages in adolescent mental health literacy, a critical topic. After that, we examined how clinical pharmacists are becoming more involved in mental health care than their predecessors. Due to their accessibility and community esteem, they excel in educational programs, counselling, support services and community outreach. We also discussed clinical pharmacist' potential to participate in mental health care and the obstacles they face in implementing these programs, such as time, training and institutional barriers. The short- and long-term effects of various treatments on mental health were also discussed. Research shows that mental health literacy increases treatment adherence, stigma and general health.

## FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Even though clinical pharmacist' benefits to mental health literacy are well documented, more needs to be learnt. Research on diverse teenage groups should be used to develop and



evaluate targeted educational interventions. Researchers should also examine how Pharmacotherapy specialist' mental health literacy programs reduce mental health inequalities over time. Clinical pharmacist, mental health professionals, educators and community groups should collaborate to create long-term mental health literacy programs. Clinical pharmacist' involvement in this sector will improve mental health outcomes for adolescents and communities. By integrating clinical chemistry into mental health care, we can improve teen mental health literacy and create a more informed generation

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

## ABBREVIATIONS

**MHL:** Mental Health Literacy.

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