

Name _____ Date _____

Handout 2D: Disabilities, Mental Health and Poverty

Directions: Review the following material. On a separate piece of butcher paper, use pictures, symbols, drawings and the information presented on this handout to describe how mental health and/or disabilities are connected to poverty.

United States	Estimate in millions	Estimate percentage
Total Population 18 to 64 years:	194.7	--
With any disability:	20.0	10.1%
Unemployed or not in labor force	13.2	66.0%
No disability:	174.7	89.9%
Unemployed or not in labor force	44.3	25.3%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Data Set: 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, C18120 and U.S. Census Bureau, Data Set: 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, S0201.

People who suffer from disabilities or mental disorders may be unable to work. However, those who are willing and capable of working may have difficulty finding employment. Two in three people with a disability are either unemployed or not in the labor force. People with disabilities may rely upon family members or public assistance. When the disabled can find work, it is often part time – leaving these people at high risk of living below the poverty line. 26.8% of working age (18-64) persons with a disability live below the poverty line, in contrast with 10.3% for persons in the same age group who do not have a disability.

Mental and physical disabilities appear in families across social and ethnic lines. Children who live in poverty, however, suffer the highest risk of physical and mental disability. Poor nutrition can result in physical and developmental disabilities.

Addictions can increase a family’s chance of living in poverty. Studies also show that abusive behavior is sometimes linked to the increased stress and isolation that accompanies poverty. Abuse or neglect by a primary caregiver or separation from a primary caregiver can lead to mental health problems and may make it harder for children to break the cycle from one generation to another.