



RHODE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE SUICIDE PREVENTION GRANT

2025 MENTAL HEALTH PARITY TRAINING EVALUATION FINDINGS

Importance of Mental Health Parity

Mental health parity focuses on state and federal laws that aim to ensure that individuals seeking treatment for mental health and substance use disorders receive the same level of insurance coverage as those seeking treatment for medical conditions. This helps to guarantee that people experiencing depression and suicidal ideation have access to quality care, ultimately contributing to the prevention of deaths by suicide. Unfortunately, parity violations still happen and due to the nuanced nature of health insurance coverage, many consumers and healthcare professionals are unaware that the care they or their patients have been denied should have been covered, resulting in individuals not receiving the care they need. To combat this, the Rhode Island Department of Health partnered with RIPIN (formerly Rhode Island Parent Information Network) to develop and implement a training for healthcare professionals covering when parity laws can be implemented, who is covered under them, and the process for filing a complaint with the goal of increasing their understanding of parity laws and ability to identify and report parity violations in the future.

Two trainings were conducted in May of 2025 and were predominantly attended by behavioral healthcare professionals in Rhode Island.

Summary of Findings

Number of pre-surveys completed: 47

Number of post-surveys completed: 30

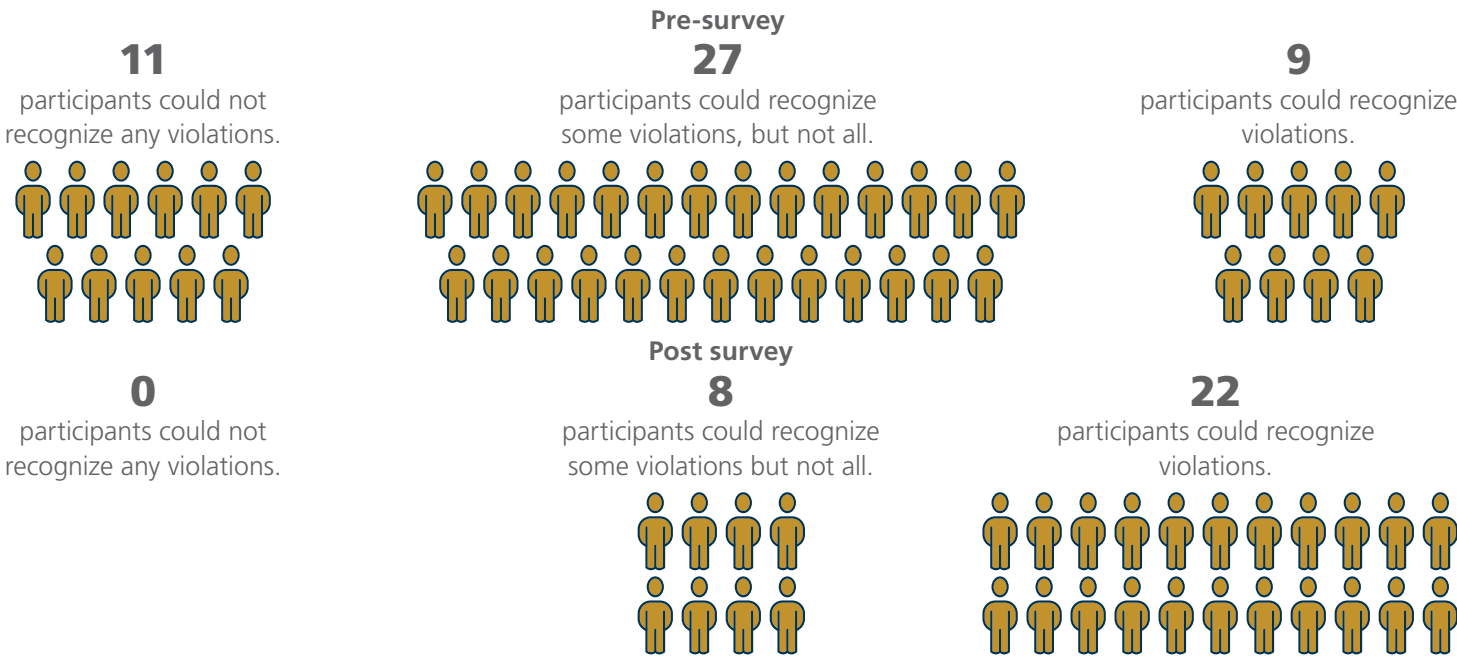
Understanding of mental health parity increased for participants after completing the trainings.

On a scale of 1-5, please rate your current understanding of mental health parity. With 1 being no understanding of mental health parity and 5 being an in-depth understanding of mental health parity.



Following participation in the trainings, all participants could recognize potential mental health parity violations in their practice.

At this current point in time, can you recognize what a potential mental health parity violation looks like in your practice?



Confidence in recognizing a mental health parity violation increased following participation in the trainings.

On a scale of 1-5, please rate your current confidence level in recognizing potential mental health parity violations. With 1 being not confident recognizing a violation and 5 being very confident recognizing a violation.

Pre-survey
2.9
Average Rating



Post survey
4.0
Average Rating



Top 3 Parity Issues Experienced in Practice

- Making the patient obtain permission before and/or after continuing behavioral health treatment more frequently or stringently than for medical/surgical services.
- Reimbursement rates that are systematically set lower for mental health/substance use disorder providers than for medical/surgical providers (both in-network and out-of-network rates)
- Frequent use of step therapy for drugs/higher levels of treatment or step therapy applied more stringently than for medical/surgical service

What Does This Mean?

- There are healthcare and behavioral healthcare providers in Rhode Island in need of training and education around mental health parity.
- After the trainings delivered by RIPIN participants felt more confident in their ability to recognize parity violation. However, the content delivered was foundational and did not cover all of the nuance of mental health parity law. Based on the initial success of the trainings we believe healthcare professionals would benefit from more in-depth parity training.
- RIDOH will continue to work with RIPIN and other Rhode Island mental health parity partners to implement the existing training and develop a more in-depth parity training.
- RIDOH, RIPIN, and other parity partners will continue to promote the use of the RIPIN consumer helpline to obtain guidance on reporting parity violations.

If you also experience these mental health parity issues in your practice and would like to set up trainings on how to identify and report mental health parity violations, please email Kelsea Tucker at Kelsea.Tucker@health.ri.gov for further information.

Individuals who believe they are experiencing a parity violation can contact the Rhode Island health insurance consumer helpline hosted by RIPIN at **401-270-0101** for support and guidance. This free resource is open to all Rhode Islanders regardless of insurance coverage.

This document is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CDC/HHS, or the U.S. Government.

