Prevalence of Mental Health Challenges & Extent of Service Use

Most children with mental health challenges do not get the help they need.

- **1 in 3** adolescents (aged 13 to 18) with mental disorders receive services for their diagnosis\(^1\).
- **Half** of adolescents with severely impairing mental disorders never receive treatment\(^2\).
- Service rates are highest for adolescents with ADHD (59.8%) and behavior disorders (45.4%)\(^3\).
- Fewer than **1 in 5** adolescents with anxiety, eating, or substance use disorders receive treatment for those disorders\(^4\).
- Hispanic and Black adolescents are less likely than their White counterparts to receive services for mood and anxiety disorders\(^5\).

Mental health is a nationwide public health issue.

The mental health and well-being of Americans are critical issues affecting each individual’s quality of life and the health of our communities, business and economic stability. It touches everyone—regardless of race, gender, class or religion.

- Half of all lifetime cases of mental and substance use disorders begin by age 14 and three-fourths by age 24\(^6\).
- Adults who began drinking alcohol before age 21 are more likely to be later classified with alcohol dependence or abuse than those who had their first drink at or after age 21\(^7\).
- More than 34,000 Americans die every year as a result of suicide—that’s approximately one every 15 minutes\(^8\).
- One estimate puts the total economic costs of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders among youth in the United States at approximately $247 billion\(^9\).
- Racial incidents can be traumatic and have been linked to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) symptoms among people of color\(^10\).
- LGBT individuals experience violence and PTSD at higher rates than the general population\(^11\).
- More than 6 in 10 U.S. youth have been exposed to violence within the past year, including witnessing a violent act, assault with a weapon, sexual victimization, child maltreatment, and dating violence. Nearly 1 in 10 was injured\(^12\).
- In a 2008 study by RAND, 18.5% of returning Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans reported symptoms consistent with post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression\(^13\).

2 Merikangas, KR et al., 2011.

3 Merikangas, KR et al., 2011.

4 Merikangas, KR et al., 2011.

5 Merikangas, KR et al., 2011.


12 SAMHSA, 2009.