



# Youth Mental Health Disorders

Even under the best of circumstances, it can be hard to tell the difference between challenging behaviors and emotions that are consistent with typical child development and those that are cause for concern. It is important to remember that many disorders like anxiety, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and depression, do occur during childhood. In fact, many adults who seek treatment reflect back on how these disorders affected their childhood and wish that they had received help sooner.

Children and Mental Health: Is This Just a Stage, National Institute of Mental Health

For people under the age of 18, the term “Serious Emotional Disturbance” refers to a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder in the past year, which resulted in functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits the child’s role or functioning in family, school, or community activities.

## **Nationally:**

### Prevalence of Any Mental Illness (AMI)

- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year.
- 50% of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24.
- 16.5% of U.S. youth aged 6-17 experienced a mental health disorder in 2016 (7.7 million people).
- 50.6% of U.S. youth aged 6-17 with a mental health disorder received treatment in 2016.
- High school students with significant symptoms of depression are more than twice as likely to drop out compared to their peers.
- 70.4% of youth in the juvenile justice system have a diagnosed mental illness.

### Prevalence of Serious Emotional Disturbance

- Of adolescents with any mental disorder, an estimated 22.2% had severe impairment. DSM-IV based criteria were used to determine impairment level.
- 13.3 percent of youth aged 12 to 17 experienced a major depressive episode, compared to 12.8 percent in 2016.
- Young adults aged 18 to 25 had an even greater increase, with 13.1 percent experiencing a major depressive episode in 2017 compared to only 10.9 percent in 2016.
- Annual prevalence of serious thoughts of suicide is 17.2% of high school students.
- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among people aged 10-34.

2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

## **In Washington State:**

Among youth aged 12–17 in Washington, the annual average percentage with a major depressive

episode (MDE) in the past year increased between 2004–2008 and 2013–2017.

- During 2013–2017, the annual average prevalence of past-year MDE in Washington was 12.7% (or 66,000), lower than the regional average (14.1%) but similar to the national average (12.1%).

Among youth aged 12–17 in Washington during 2013–2017 with a MDE in the past year, an annual average of 41.1% (or 27,000) received depression care in the past year, similar to both the regional average (44.7%) and the national average (40.3%).

Behavioral Health Barometer Washington, Volume 5: Indicators as measured through the 2017 National Survey on Drug Use and Health and the National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services

### **In Kitsap County:**

- In 2018, more than a third of 8th graders, and 4 in 10 10th graders, reported feeling so sad or hopeless for 2 or more weeks in a row that they stopped doing usual activities at least once in the past year.
- Both Kitsap percentages have increased statistically significantly from 2012 to 2018 and the 8th grade percentage is statistically significantly worse than the state overall.
- Females have higher percentages (almost 1 in 2) than males, and 8th and 10th graders identifying as a race or ethnicity other than non-Hispanic White have higher percentages than those who identify as non-Hispanic White.
- In 2018, 39% of 8th graders and 32% of 10th graders had a calculated risk factor of poor family management based on their responses to 7 questions. The 8th grade percentage is increasing from 2012 to 2018 and is worse than the state. The 10th grade percentage is the same over time and roughly the same as the state.
- In 2018, just over 1 in 5 Kitsap 8th and 10th graders reported not having an adult to turn to when sad or hopeless. The 8th grade percentage is higher than 2012, but not statistically significantly higher or different than the state's percentage. The 10th grade percentage is statistically significantly decreased from 2012 and is lower than the state.
- In 2018, almost 1 in 4 8th graders (23%) and more than 1 in 4 10th graders (28%) reported having seriously considered suicide in the past year. Both percentages are increasing statistically significantly since 2012 and statistically significantly higher than the state.
- In 2018, just under 1 in 2 Kitsap 8th and 10th graders reported being highly hopeful. The Kitsap 8th grade percentage was lower than the state's percentage, while the 10th grade percentage was about the same as the state.

KITSAP COUNTY HEALTH STATUS ASSESSMENT, 2019, Kitsap Public Health District

### **Consequences of Mental Illness in Youth:**

Youth with mental health disorders often experience difficulties in a variety of settings including within their own families at home, in school, and in the community. Youth with mental health disorders are more likely to be unhappy at school, be absent, or be suspended or expelled. Their learning is negatively impacted because of poor concentration, distractibility, inability to retain

information, poor peer relationships, and aggressive behavior. They also may be withdrawn and difficult to engage.

- During any given school year, children and youth with mental health disorders may miss as many as 18 to 22 days.
- The rates of suspension and expulsion of children and youth with mental disorders are three times higher than their peers.

Youth in high school with mental health disorders are more likely to fail or drop out of school compared to their peers in the general population. They tend to engage in high-risk behaviors including drug and alcohol use and/or suicide attempts, especially those youth who may be significantly depressed because they are shunned or marginalized.

- Up to 14 percent of youth with mental health disorders receive mostly Ds and Fs, compared to 7 percent for all children with disabilities.
- Youth with untreated mental illness have high rates of absenteeism and tardiness. Referral to a school-based mental health center or to counseling can help to reduce absenteeism rates by 50 percent and tardiness rates by 25 percent.
- Of students with disabilities in the special education system, those with emotional disorders consistently have the lowest graduation rates and highest dropout rates compared to other disability categories.
- Only 32 percent of students with a serious mental illness continue onto postsecondary education.

youth.gov, Youth Topic, Mental Health

### **Treatment of Children & Youth for Mental Illness:**

Although diagnosable mental health and substance use conditions are often identified with adolescence, early life, approximately from birth to age eight, is a time of critical brain development that plays a substantial role in establishing predispositions for behavioral health conditions later in life. To ensure that each child has the best chance to live a mentally healthy life, and to reduce overall costs to society, families should have access to high-quality, evidence based:

- Maternity care and pediatric healthcare services that attend to the mental and general health needs of both children and parents.
- Supports for new parents to build skills to promote effective family management and healthy child development.
- Supportive, curated social networks for parents to exchange information, assistance, and encouragement.
- Childcare and pre-school programs that help children to be ready for kindergarten.

Promotion Of Mental Health During Early Childhood, Mental Health America

Early identification, accurate diagnosis and effective treatment of mental health and substance use conditions can alleviate enormous suffering for young people and their families dealing with behavioral health challenges. Providing early care can help young people to more quickly recover and benefit from their education, to develop positive relationships, to gain access to employment, and ultimately to lead more meaningful and productive lives.

Early Identification Of Mental Health Issues In Young People, Mental Health America