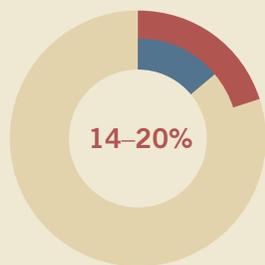


Promotion of Mental Health in the U.S.

Prevention, early intervention, and mental health promotion can help assure the health of young children and adolescents. There are several core concepts behind the science of prevention and promotion:¹

- Mental, emotional, and behavioral health refers to the overall psychological well-being of individuals and includes the presence of positive characteristics, such as the ability to manage stress, demonstrate flexibility under changing conditions, and bounce back from adverse situations.
- Prevention of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders requires a shift in focus. Instead of addressing a disorder after it occurs, prevention means supporting the healthy development of young people starting at birth.
- Mental health and physical health go hand in hand. Young people who grow up in good physical health are likely to also have good mental health; similarly, good mental health contributes to good physical health.
- Successful prevention must involve many different groups, including informed parents, educators, primary care providers, and mental health and substance abuse prevention and treatment professionals.
- Promotion of mental health is essential throughout a young person's developmental life cycle, from the earliest years of life through adolescence and young adulthood. It's also important to promote mental health in a variety of settings including families, schools, neighborhoods, and communities.



In any given year, the percentage of **young people age 25 and under with mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders** is estimated to be between 14 and 20 percent.²

more than
half
started in childhood
or adolescence

Among adults reporting a mental, emotional, or behavioral disorder during their lifetime, more than half report that the disorder started in childhood or adolescence.³



An estimated one in five (or 43.7 million) people aged 18 or older in the United States **had any mental illness* in the past year.**⁴

\$247
BILLION

Mental, emotional, and behavioral issues among young people have enormous personal, family, and societal costs. The **annual cost of these disorders** was estimated in 2007 to be \$247 billion.⁵

* SAMHSA's National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) defines any mental illness as currently or at any time in the past year having had a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder (excluding developmental and substance use disorders) of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria specified within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV; American Psychiatric Association [APA], 1994).

Factors that Affect the Healthy Development of Young People

Exposure to risk and protective factors affects the healthy development and mental health of young people. Risk factors are conditions or characteristics that put an individual at greater risk for a specific health problem or disorder. Protective factors are personal traits or conditions in families and communities that, when present, contribute to an individual's well-being.

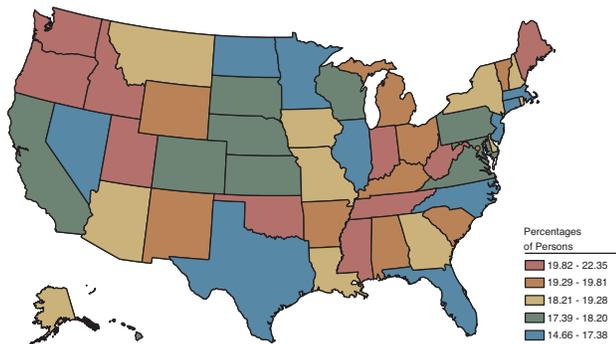
- **Protective factors** can make people resilient to mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders. Some protective factors include:⁶
 - Reliable support and discipline from parents and caregivers
 - Good communication skills

- Healthy peer groups
- Social connectedness
- Academic success
- **Risk factors** can be detrimental to mental health and well-being, and include the following:⁷
 - Family conflict
 - Loneliness
 - Excessive substance use, and parental substance abuse and/or mental illness
 - Stressful life events
 - Academic failure

See [page 3](#) for information about ways to promote mental health in your family and community.

Any Mental Illness in the Past Year Among People Aged 18 or Older, by State:

Percentages, Annual Averages Based on 2011 and 2012 NSDUHs



Source: SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, NSDUH, 2011 and 2012.
<http://www.samhsa.gov/data/NSDUH/2k12State/Maps/NSDUHsaeMaps2012.htm>

A National Perspective

This map displays differences in percentages of people who have experienced mental illness across the United States. While levels vary, it's important to note that in every state at least 17.6 percent of people aged 18 or older have experienced mental illness. Knowing the prevalence of these disorders can help communities allocate resources to prevent future problems.

See [page 3](#) to learn what you can do to lower this statistic and promote mental health.

What Communities Can Do

Parents and Caregivers

Create a positive home environment by focusing on these key elements:

- Create and maintain a safe and secure environment, which includes making children feel valued and comfortable with sharing their problems.⁸
- Be sure that you and your child communicate effectively and often.
- Limit the presence of alcohol and cigarettes and do not use illicit drugs.

In addition to the positive actions you can do at home to ensure your child's well-being, ask your child's doctor about routine mental health screenings. Seek outside medical help from a physician or one of the additional resources listed below if:⁹

- You recognize changes in your child's behavior that concern you. Such changes would be severe, persistent, and affect your child's ability to take part in daily activities.
- Your child experiences problems such as changes in appetite or sleep patterns, social withdrawal or constant fearfulness.
- Your child exhibits signs of distress such as sadness or tearfulness, or self-destructive behavior.

Schools

Schools can promote healthy behavioral development among children by:¹⁰

- Educating students about positive behaviors and decision making, and applauding positive choices.
- Helping children explore their individual talents, interests, and competencies.
- Maintaining a safe school environment.
- Informing staff, parents, and students about symptoms of behavioral health issues and available resources.

Health Care Providers

- Make questions about children's mental health

part of routine practice. This will facilitate open communication with families.¹¹

- Provide fact sheets to youth and their families on promoting emotional health in children, such as **Tips to Promote Social-Emotional Health Among Young Children** (available at <http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Mental-Health/Documents/SE-Tips.pdf>) and **Tips to Promote Social-Emotional Health Among Teens** (available at <http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Mental-Health/Documents/SE-TeenTips.pdf>).
- Use a screening tool such as the **Geriatric Depression Scale** to identify depression in older adults. Recognizing risk factors for issues like anxiety and depression can assist accurate diagnosis.¹²
- Screen for mental disorders across patients' life span and refer individuals to treatment and other resources when appropriate.¹³

Community Leaders and Organizations

- By funding mental health-related programs and awareness initiatives, communities can proactively work toward preventing behavioral health problems rather than waiting until these issues develop and treatment is the only available option.
- Communities can also develop strategies to publicly communicate the importance of mental health and the value of preventive services.
- Communities can implement evidence-based promotion and prevention services for young children, adolescents, and the caregivers of children with mental health issues. Visit SAMHSA's **National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)**, available at <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/>, for more information.
- Learn more about national efforts in the **National Prevention Strategy**, available at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/initiatives/prevention/strategy/report.pdf>.

Workplaces¹⁴

- Weave information about mental health-friendly policies and resources into routine communications and special workplace events, such as new employee orientations and banners on the company intranet. Include information about work-life balance, health and wellness, and how to manage workplace stress.
- Institute training for supervisors about mental illnesses and how to supervise in ways that promote mental health and decrease discrimination toward employees with mental illnesses.
- Explore SAMHSA's **Workplaces That Thrive: A**

Resource for Creating Mental Health-Friendly Work Environments, available at http://www.promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov/publications/business_resource.aspx, for more information about promoting mental and emotional well-being in the workplace.

Everyone

- Create families and communities that are nurturing and positive.
- Engage in positive communication and offer support to children and youth, especially during times of stress.
- Exercise often, and maintain good nutrition and physical health.

Helpful Resources

- **SAMHSA's Toolkit for Community Conversations About Mental Health**, available at <http://www.samhsa.gov/communityconversations>, is a resource to help those interested in holding a community dialogue about mental health. It has three sections to help communities and groups plan and facilitate a dialogue about mental health: an information brief, a discussion guide, and a planning guide. These materials are available in English and Spanish.
- **MentalHealth.gov**, <http://www.mentalhealth.gov>, provides one-stop access to comprehensive U.S. government information about mental health and mental health issues.
- **SAMHSA's National Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP)**, available at <http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov>, is a searchable online registry of more than 250 interventions supporting mental health promotion, substance abuse prevention, and mental health and substance abuse treatment.
- **"Preventing Mental, Emotional, and Behavioral Disorders Among Young People: Progress and Possibilities" by The National Research Council and Institute of Medicine**, available at <http://iom.edu/Reports/2009/Preventing-Mental-Emotional-and-Behavioral-Disorders-Among-Young-People-Progress-and-Possibilities.aspx>, is a resource that analyzes prevention practices that have emerged in a variety of settings, including programs for at-risk populations (such as children and youth in the child welfare system), school-based interventions, interventions in primary care settings, and community services designed to address a broad array of mental health needs and populations. This resource focuses special attention on the research base and program experience with younger populations.
- **SAMHSA's Resource Center to Promote Acceptance, Dignity and Social Inclusion Associated with Mental Health (ADS Center)**, available at <http://promoteacceptance.samhsa.gov/default.aspx>, is a center that enhances acceptance and social inclusion by ensuring that people with mental health issues can live full, productive lives within communities without fear of prejudice and discrimination. The ADS Center provides information and assistance to develop successful efforts to counteract prejudice and discrimination and promote social inclusion.
- **The Partnership for Workplace Mental Health**, available at <http://www.workplacentalhealth.org>, is an organization that collaborates with employers and maintains a database of successful innovations and strategies.
- **SAMHSA's Behavioral Health Treatment Services Locator**, available at <http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov>, is a resource that can help people find mental health services and resources in their communities.

Confidential help is available 24 hours a day through the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255), a toll-free service funded by SAMHSA. Chat services are also available through the Lifeline website (<http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx>).

You can also call SAMHSA's National Helpline, 1-800-662-HELP (4357) or 1-800-487-4889 (TDD), for free and confidential information and treatment referrals in English and Spanish.

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