



Understanding Youth Mental Health

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Learning Objectives



- ▶ Understanding the issues around youth mental health
- ▶ Learning signs related to youth mental health and substance use
- ▶ Parents Interventions
- ▶ Parent Resources

Understanding ACEs on Child Development

- ▶ **The ACE Score:** A tally of different types of abuse, neglect, and family challenges a person experienced growing up. Higher ACE scores are strongly correlated with a greater risk for serious health and social challenges in adulthood
- ▶ **Common Categories:** ACEs typically include physical, emotional, or sexual abuse; physical or emotional neglect; and household challenges like domestic violence, substance misuse, mental illness, or parental separation/incarceration
- ▶ **Health Impact:** The toxic stress from these early events can disrupt brain development and immunity, linking them to lifelong health issues such as heart disease, depression, and substance use disorders

ACE Categories

- ▶ **Abuse**
- ▶ **Physical Abuse:** Non-accidental physical harm that results in injury.
- ▶ **Sexual Abuse:** Any form of sexual exploitation or inappropriate contact with a child.
- ▶ **Emotional Abuse:** Behavior that undermines a child's mental health or self-worth, such as verbal assaults, humiliation, or threats

ACE Categories

- ▶ **Neglect**
- ▶ **Physical Neglect:** Failure to provide for a child's basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, or medical care.
- ▶ **Emotional Neglect:** Failing to provide emotional support, love, or a sense of belonging.

ACE Categories



- ▶ **Household Dysfunction**
- ▶ **Household Substance Abuse:** Living with a household member who misuses alcohol or drugs.
- ▶ **Mental Illness in the Household:** Living with anyone who was depressed, mentally ill, or attempted suicide.
- ▶ **Incarcerated Household Member:** Having a relative or caregiver who went to jail or prison.
- ▶ **Domestic Violence:** Witnessing a mother or caregiver being abused, humiliated, or physically attacked.
- ▶ **Parental Separation or Divorce:** Losing a parent due to separation, divorce, abandonment, or other reasons

Statistics on youth mental health

- ▶ **Anxiety problems, behavior disorders, and depression are the most commonly diagnosed mental disorders in children.** Based on US data from 2022–2023:[1](#)
- ▶ 11% of children ages 3-17 had current, diagnosed anxiety (9% of males and 12% of females).
- ▶ 8% of children ages 3-17 had current, diagnosed behavior disorders (10% of males and 5% of females)
- ▶ 4% of children ages 3-17 had current, diagnosed depression (3% of males and 6% of females).

Statistics on Youth Mental Health



- ▶ Among US adolescents ages 12-17 in 2021-2023:[3](#)
- ▶ 20% reported symptoms of anxiety in the past two weeks.
- ▶ 18% reported symptoms of depression in the past two weeks.

Statistics Youth Mental Health

- ▶ Among US high school students in 2023:[4](#)
- ▶ 40% reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in the past year.
- ▶ 20% reported seriously considering attempting suicide in the past year.
- ▶ 16% reported making a suicide plan in the past year.
- ▶ 9% reporting attempting suicide in the past year.
- ▶ 22% report drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.
- ▶ 17% report using marijuana in the past 30 days.
- ▶ 4% report misusing prescription pain medication in the past 30 days.
- ▶ 10% report ever using illicit drugs.

Signs for parents

- ▶ Feeling very sad or withdrawn or easily irritated for more than two weeks
- ▶ Seriously trying to harm or kill themselves, or making plans to do so
- ▶ Experiencing sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart or fast breathing

Signs for Parents

- ▶ Getting in many fights or wanting to hurt others
- ▶ Showing severe out-of-control behavior that can hurt oneself or others
- ▶ Not eating, throwing up, or using laxatives to make themselves lose weight

Signs for Parents

- ▶ Having intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities
- ▶ Experiencing extreme difficulty controlling behavior, putting themselves in physical danger or causing problems in school
- ▶ Using drugs or alcohol

Signs for Parents

- ▶ Having severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- ▶ Showing drastic changes in behavior or personality
- ▶ A drop in their school performance

Contributing Factors



- ▶ Loss of a loved one
- ▶ Divorce or separation of their parents
- ▶ Any major transition—new home, new school, etc.
- ▶ Traumatic life experiences, like living through a natural disaster
- ▶ Teasing or bullying
- ▶ Difficulties in school or with classmates

Youth Substance Use

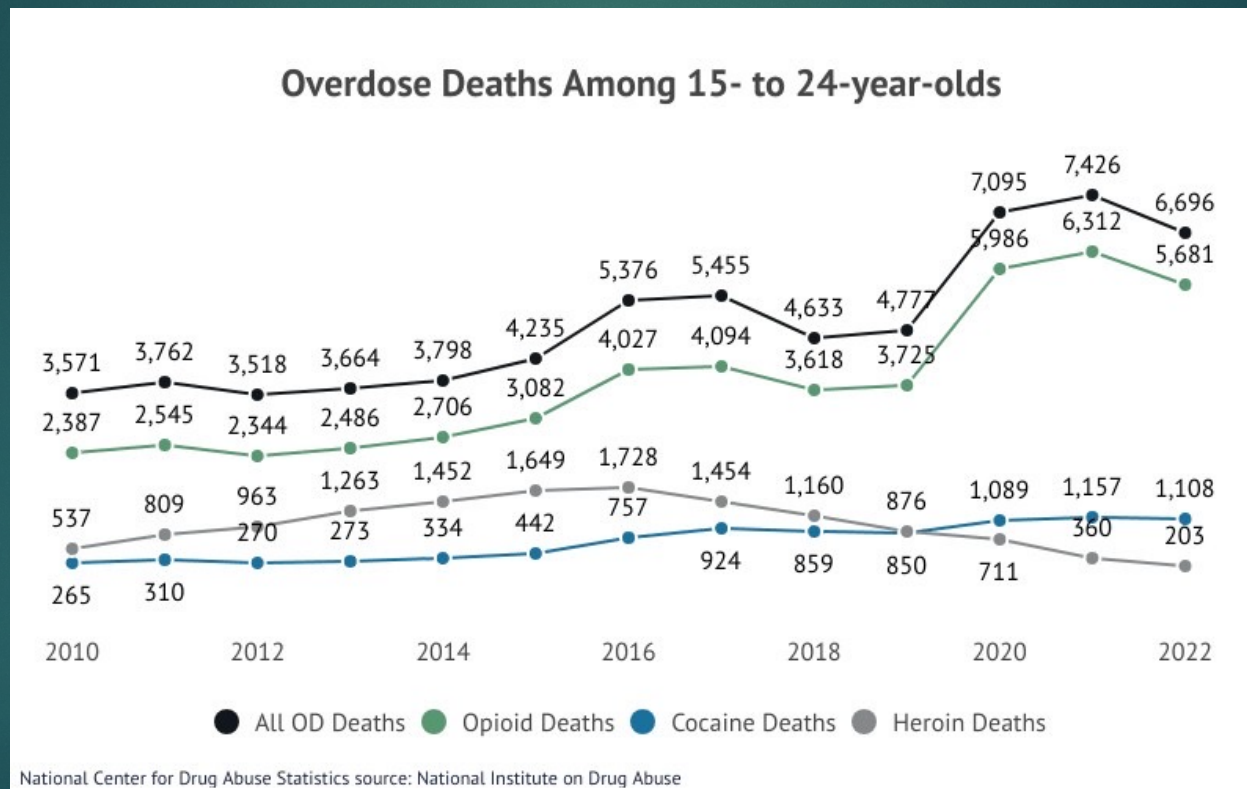


- ▶ 217,000 or 7.11% of 12- to 17-year-olds report using drugs in the last month.
- ▶ Among 12- to 17-year-olds who used illicit drugs in the last month, 86.64% reported marijuana use.
- ▶ 11.21% of 12- to 17-year-olds reported using marijuana in the last year.
- ▶ 0.25% of 12- to 17-year-olds reported using cocaine in the last year.
- ▶ 0.07% of 12- to 17-year-olds reported using methamphetamine in the last year.
- ▶ 1.62% of 12- to 17-year-olds reported using pain relievers in the last year.

Youth Substance Use

- ▶ 7.67% of all 12- to 17-year-olds used alcohol in the last month.
- ▶ 12- to 17-year-olds in California are 11.49% more likely to use alcohol than the average American in their age group.
- ▶ 1,200,000 adults aged 18- to 25-years-old used drugs in the last month.
- ▶ 18- to 25-year-olds in California are 11.47% more likely to use drugs than the average American in the same age group.
- ▶ 6.99% of teenagers aged 12- to 17-years-old met the criteria for DUD in the last year.
- ▶ 3.01% of teenagers aged 12- to 17-years-old met the criteria for AUD in the last year.

Stats of Overdose



Ways to Support Youth Mental Health

- ▶ Physical Self Care
- ▶ Foster Mental/Emotional Care
- ▶ Discuss social media usage
- ▶ Teach boundaries
- ▶ Talk about emotional health

Parents/Caregivers Actions



- ▶ Manage your own mental health- understanding the link between parent mental health and youth mental health
- ▶ Help youth develop coping skills
- ▶ Understanding how to use therapy

Parent Resources

- ▶ NAMI- www.nami.org
- ▶ SAMSHA- www.samsha.gov

Questions

