



Mental Health Challenges for Transition Age Youth Fact Sheet

The Facts

Mental health challenges and disorders are common. Approximately 20 percent of youth ages 13 to 18 experience severe mental health disorders in a given year.¹ A severe mental illness is defined as having, at any time during the past year, a diagnosable mental, behavior, or emotional disorder that causes serious functional impairment that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.²

Mental health challenges often develop during adolescence, 50 percent of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75 percent by age 24.³

Youth and young adults may not be well informed about how to recognize mental health problems and how to get help. Young people with mental health challenges or mental health disorders may not even be aware that they need help.

¹ *Mental Health First Aid USA, First Edition (Revised) 2016 Statistical Update*

² Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 2016. *Mental and Substance Use Disorders*, online at <https://www.samhsa.gov/disorders>.

³ National Institute of Mental Health, (NIMH) <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>

Support & Treatment

- Reach out to someone you trust and ask for help. This person could be a family member, close friend, mentor, or counselor.
- Seek assistance from a mental health professional or specialist. A trustworthy and knowledgeable mental health professional will be a valuable ally.
- Find a support group and connect with others during this transition stage. It may benefit you to hear other's success stories.
- Practice self-care techniques. Find an activity, exercise, eat well, and get the recommended amount of sleep.
- Stay informed; learn more about mental health challenges and disorders.
- Be realistic and mindful of your needs and limits.⁴

⁴ National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), <http://www.nami.org/Find-Support/Living-with-a-Mental-Health-Condition>