



Mental Health Awareness Fact Sheet

What is Mental Health?

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.”¹

Mental Health Challenges/Mental Disorders

- **The Main Place** defines a *mental health challenge* as: any disease or condition affecting the brain that influences the way a person thinks, feels, behaves, and/or relates to others and to their surroundings. ²
- **Children and Youth** with a *serious emotional disturbance* are defined as: persons from birth up to age 18, who currently or at any time during the past year, have had a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder which substantially interferes with or limits the child’s role or functioning in family, school, or community activities. ³
- **Adults** with a *serious mental illness* are defined by the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services** as: persons age 18 and over, who currently or at any time during the past year, have had a diagnosable mental, behavioral, or emotional disorder of sufficient duration to meet diagnostic criteria, resulting in functional impairment which substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities. ⁴
- **Mental Disorders** often occur in combination. Terms used to describe having more than one mental disorder are *dual diagnosis, comorbidity, and co-occurrence*. ⁵

Mental Health Disorders in Children and Adolescents Facts

7



- In 2014, **11.4%** percent of adolescents aged 12-17 (2.8 million adolescents) had a major depressive episode during the past year.
- Anxiety disorders are among the most common mental health challenges that occur in children and adolescents.
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADHD) was diagnosed an estimated **11%** of school- aged children.
- Approximately **3%** of adolescents in the United States have eating disorder, including anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Girls are more than 2 ½ times as likely to have an eating disorder.

PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH AGE 8-15 WITH DIAGNOSABLE MENTAL DISORDER WITHIN THE PREVIOUS YEAR ⁶

Any disorder	13.1%
Attention- deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	8.6%
Mood disorders	3.7%
Major depressive disorder	2.7%

Impact of Mental Health Challenges and Mental Disorders

- In the United States, nearly **50 million** of the population will meet criteria for a mental disorder at some point in their life, many with their first onset during childhood or adolescence. 8
- When mental illnesses start at this stage of life, they can affect the young person's education, ability to work and form relationships, and they can lead to the use of alcohol and other drugs.
- Early identification and treatment of a mental health challenge or disorder can prevent the loss of productivity, high medical costs, and the associated burdens of family members and caregivers. 9
- Mental health challenges/disorders are the leading cause of disability in the United States and Canada. 36
- They account for 25 % of years of life lost due to disability or early death. 37

References

Kelly, C.M., Kitchener, B.A., Jorm, A.F., (2016). *Mental Health First Aid USA: For Adults Assisting Young People*. Washington, DC: National Council for Behavioral Health. p4-7.

1. World Health Organization. (2007). *Mental Health: Strengthening Mental Health Promotion (Fact Sheet No. 220)*, p. 1. Geneva: WHO
2. The Main Place. (n.d.). *Mental Health Challenges*. <http://www.themainplace.org//mentalchallenges.html>, accessed February 18, 2011.
3. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2007). *Definitions and Terms Relating to Co-Occurring Disorders. COCE Overview Paper 1*. DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 07-4163, p. 2. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services: 266
4. Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. (2007). *Definitions and Terms Relating to Co-Occurring Disorders. COCE Overview Paper 1*. DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 07-4163, p. 2. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services: 265
5. National Institutes of Health Medline Plus. *Dual Diagnosis*. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplusdualdiagnosis.html>, accessed February 18, 2011.
6. Polanczyk, G.V., Salum, G.A., Sugaya, L.S., Caye, A., & Rhode, L.A. (2015). Annual Research Review: A meta-analysis of the worldwide prevalence of mental disorders in children and adolescents. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 56: 345-365.
7. Merikangas, K.R., He, J., Burstein, M., Swanson, S. A., Avenevoli, S., Cui, L., Benjet, C., Georgiades, K., & Swendsen, J. (2010). *Lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in U.S. adolescents: Results from the National Comorbidity Study-Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A)*. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 49(10): 980-989
8. Kessler, R.C., Amminger, G.P., Aguilar-Gaxiola, S., Alonso, J., Lee, S., & Ustun, T.B. (2007). *Age of onset of mental disorders: A review of recent literature*. *Current Opinion in Psychiatry*, 20(4) 359-364
9. Santoro, K., & Murphy, B. (2010, February). *Improving Early Identification & Treatment of Adolescent Depression: Considerations & strategies for Health Plans: NIHCM Issue Brief*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Health Care Management.
10. Healthy People 2010 Webpage. Assessed on February 28, 2016 <http://healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/mental-health-and-mental-disorders>.
11. Whiteford, H.S., Degenhardt, L., Rehm, J., Baxter, A.J., Ferrari, A.J., Erskine, H.E., Charlson, F.J., Norman, R.E., Flaxman, A.D., Johns, N., Burstein, R., Murray, C.J., & Vos, T. (2013). Global burden of disease attributable to mental and substance use disorders: findings from the Global Burden of Disease Study 2010.

