

New York CAN Mental Health



Fact Sheet

Nearly one million children and adolescents under the age of 18 in New York State have emotional, behavioral, or substance use disorders. In any given year, an estimated 40,000 of these young people actually receive mental health treatment.

20% of young people have an emotional, behavioral or mental health disorder and at least 5% have a serious disorder that disrupts daily functioning in home, at school, or in the community. Over 40,000 young people in New York State's public schools are classified as having an emotional disturbance.

The array of services for children and families has grown over time, with a particular emphasis on community-based services that allow children to remain at home and in school while receiving treatment. Yet most mental health disorders go undiagnosed and untreated, often leading to lifelong problems for the child and family. As these children grow to maturity, they are more prone to drop out of school, lose jobs, abuse drugs, and even complete suicide. Early recognition and prompt access to treatment can prevent a downward spiral of school failure, poor employment and poverty in adulthood.

Key Facts*

- Students classified by schools as emotionally disturbed have poorer educational outcomes than all other students with disabilities. About 32% graduate while 56% drop out. The record is far better for students with mental/developmental disabilities (49% graduation rate) and physical disabilities (67% graduation rate).
- Suicide has been the third leading cause of death, after unintentional injuries and homicide, among those 15-19 years of age in New York for over 20 years.
- Mental health and substance abuse needs have been and continue to be the top two service needs of youth upon admission to juvenile detention facilities in New York State.
- Children who are uninsured or who have private insurance utilize less mental health care than do children covered by Medicaid or Child Health Plus.

What's Needed:

New York State needs to increase its investment in services and supports for young people with mental health needs. The state must develop a children's mental health system that assures timely access to coordinated child- and family-centered services in all parts of the state.

* For source information, refer to *Growing Up In New York, Charting the Next Generation of Workers, Citizens, and Leaders*. SCAA 2006.