

KEY MESSAGES AND STATS

Messages

- Mental Health America (MHA) has developed its 2018 Back to School Toolkit to help increase understanding of how traumatic events can trigger mental health issues and is providing materials on the topic for parents, school personnel, and young people.
- Half of all mental health disorders begin by the age of 14. About 75 percent begin by the age of 24. Early identification and early intervention in children and young adults is essential to their current and future mental wellbeing.
- Mental health issues are common and treatable and should be addressed as soon as possible - before Stage 4.
- It's important for parents, caregivers, and school personnel to know the signs that a young person is struggling with his or her mental health and be willing to help.
- While we can't completely shield young people from all the traumatic situations they may face, we can help them learn to manage their emotions and reactions in ways that cultivate resilience.
- When someone just doesn't "feel right" and isn't sure why, it's important to know the signs and symptoms of mental health issues and seek help.
- Free, confidential, and anonymous screening tools are available at MHAScreening.org for parents and youth to find out if a young person may have symptoms of a behavioral, emotional or cognitive disorder.
- Don't suffer in silence! Young people should find someone they trust and start a conversation about their mental health. Crisis lines are available to call or text if needed.
- If you are concerned about your child and think he or she may be dealing with a mental health issue, reach out and start a conversation. Don't assume it's just "kids being kids" when your gut tells you it may be something more. Consider taking the parents screen at mhascreening.org to check symptoms that you are witnessing.

Stats

11% of people aged 2-17 years old in the U.S. currently have one or more emotional, behavioral, or developmental conditions.
[<http://www.nschdata.org/browse/data-snapshots/nsch-profiles/mental-health?geo=>]

At some point in their lives, half of all adolescents will experience a mental health disorder.
[Merikangas KR, He JP, Burstein M, Swanson SA, Avenevoli S, Cui L, Benjet C, Georgiades K, Swendsen J. Lifetime prevalence of mental disorders in U.S. adolescents: results from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication--Adolescent Supplement (NCS-A). *J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry*. 2010 Oct;49(10):980-9. PMID: 20855043]

Nearly one-third of adolescents aged 13-18 will experience an anxiety disorder in their lifetime.
[Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Merikangas KR, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of 12-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Arch Gen Psychiatry*. 2005 Jun;62(6):617-27. PMID: 15939839]

12.8% of the U.S. population aged 12 to 17 (or 3.1 million adolescents) have had at least one major depressive episode in the past year.
[2016 NSDUH: <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-DetTabs-2016/NSDUH-DetTabs-2016.pdf>]

Feel free to supplement these messages and statistics with language from the fact sheets and other materials included in this toolkit.