State Public Health Symposium

Youth Mental Health Legislative Trends and Policy Options

June 23, 2022

Tammy Hill, health senior policy specialist
Children & Youth Mental Health Trends

- **Mental Health Conditions**
  - Any Mental Illness (AMI) can include,
    - Anxiety, panic disorders and depression
  - Serious Mental Illness (SMI) can include,
    - Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder, Manic Depressive Disorder

Rising Rates of Mental Health Disorders

Approximately 1 in 11 children 3-17 years of age were diagnosed with ADHD and anxiety disorders.

1 in 5 adolescents have experienced a major depressive episode or seriously considered suicide.

Rates of suicide and suicidal ideations have increased most among: females, non-Hispanic whites, Blacks, sexual minorities and 12th-grade students.

*National Institute of Mental Health*
Children & Youth Behavioral Health Trends

Mental Health + Substance Use = Behavioral Health

- Substance Use Disorder
  - A recurrent use of alcohol, legal or illegal drugs that can cause clinical harm to one's health, disability or major responsibilities such as work, school and home.

Rising Rates of Behavioral Health Disorders

1 in 8 youth have reported using illicit substances within the last year.

Illicit use of alcohol, cannabis, opioids and prescription drugs have been reported most commonly among youth and young adults.

For adolescents and young adults, opioid overdose deaths have increased 500% since 1999.
Children and Youth Mental Health Legislative Trends

• Creation of task forces, committees or executive agencies to better understand and respond to youth mental health challenges
  • Iowa SF479 (2019)
  • Louisiana SR205 (2022)

• Increased awareness, access and treatment services for mental health
  • Kentucky SR34 (2021)
  • Colorado HB21-1258 (2021)
Children and Youth Mental Health Legislative Trends

• Increased coordination and resources with other state systems, such as:
  • Human services Hawaii SR16 (2020)
  • Criminal justice Montana HJR35 (2021)
  • Department of Health Maryland HB129 (2022)

Related policy areas: adverse childhood experiences, trauma-informed care, child maltreatment and social-emotional learning
Focusing on Youth Mental Health

Kathleen Ethier, PhD
Director, Division of Adolescent and School Health
June 23, 2022
CDC Strives to Help Youth Be Healthy and Successful

We envision a future where all youth in the U.S. will be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources for a healthy adolescence and adulthood.
Adolescent Mental Health Was Moving in the Wrong Direction Prior to the Pandemic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seriously considered attempting suicide</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Made a suicide plan</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attempted suicide</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>Red</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were injured in a suicide attempt that had to be treated by a doctor or nurse</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Yellow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Disparities Among LGBQ Youth

- Felt persistently sad or hopeless
- Attempted suicide in the year prior

National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009-2019
Disparities Among Female Youth

Nationwide Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2009-2019

- Persistently sad or hopeless: 19.1% in 2009, 26.8% in 2019 (female)
- Attempted suicide in the year prior: 4.6% in 2009, 6.6% in 2019 (female)
New CDC Data Reveal Magnitude of Adolescents’ Challenges During the Pandemic

- CDC developed the Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey modeled on the YRBS and conducted in Spring 2021
  - School-based recruitment, online survey
  - Nationally representative
  - Assessed adolescent health and well-being during the pandemic
While the pandemic affected all students, it did not affect all students equally.
Students of Color Experienced Greater Levels of Disruption

- Asian students reported the highest levels of parent job loss.
- Black students reported the highest levels of hunger, but other students of color reported similar levels.

Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Parent Job Loss</th>
<th>Hunger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiracial</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LGBQ Students Were Disproportionately Impacted by Abuse at Home

Lesbian, gay, or bisexual

10% Lesbian, gay, or Bisexual
20% Lesbian, gay, or Bisexual
13% Other or Questioning

lesbian, gay, bisexual

74%
50%
76%

other or

Heterosexual

Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, 2021
Experiences of Racism in School

Asian, Black, and Multiracial

Students who experienced racism in school were more likely to have poor mental health and less likely to feel connected to people at school.
Adolescents are experiencing a mental health crisis.
Too Many Adolescents Are Experiencing Poor Mental Health and Suicidality

More than 1 in 3 had **poor mental health during the pandemic**

Nearly half **felt persistently sad or hopeless** in the past year

Two in ten **seriously considered suicide** in the past year

Nearly 1 in 10 **attempted suicide** in the past year
LGBQ Students Are More Likely to Experience Poor Mental Health and Suicidality

Nearly 2 in 3 LGBQ students experienced poor mental health during the pandemic.

LGBQ students were more than 3x as likely to have attempted suicide in the past year.

Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, 2021
Female Students Are More Likely to Experience Poor Mental Health and Suicidality

Female students were more than 2x as likely to have attempted suicide in the past year.

Female students were 2x as likely to experience poor mental health during the pandemic.
The Power of School Connectedness Is Clear

Students who didn’t feel close to people at school had higher levels of poor mental health and suicide-related behaviors.

- Experienced Poor Mental Health During the Pandemic:
  - Felt Connected: 28%
  - Didn’t Feel Connected: 45%

- Felt Persistently Sad or Hopeless:
  - Felt Connected: 35%
  - Didn’t Feel Connected: 53%

- Attempted Suicide in the Past Year:
  - Felt Connected: 6%
  - Didn’t Feel Connected: 12%
We Have More Work to do to Improve School Connectedness

○ Support recovery and resilience following the pandemic
  • Less than half of students felt connected to others at school during the pandemic

○ Address racism in schools
  • Students who experienced racism in schools were less likely to feel connected at school

○ Make schools safer and more supportive for LGBTQ+ youth
  • LGBQ students were less likely to feel connected at school
    • Black LGBQ students (25%) and Black female LGBQ students (22%) felt least connected of all groups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Management</th>
<th>Service-Learning Programs</th>
<th>Mentoring Programs</th>
<th>LGBTQ Supportive Policies and Practices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing professional development on classroom management techniques, and policies and practices that support youth</td>
<td>Implementing school-based service-learning programs</td>
<td>Implementing school-based mentoring programs</td>
<td>Implementing policies and practices that support LGBTQ youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Activities to Improve Inclusivity in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genders and Sexualities Alliances (GSAs)</th>
<th>Identifying Safe Spaces</th>
<th>Prohibiting Harassment</th>
<th>Professional Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create or enhance student-led clubs that aim to create a safe, welcoming, and accepting school environment for all youth</td>
<td>Identify “safe spaces” (e.g., counselor’s office, classroom) where LGBTQ youth can receive support from administrators, teachers, or other school staff</td>
<td>Prohibit harassment based on a student’s perceived or actual sexual orientation or gender identity</td>
<td>Provide professional development to all school staff on creating inclusive environments and supporting LGBTQ youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When Schools Are Safer and More Supportive, Health and Well-being Improves

In schools implementing this approach within CDC-funded districts, students were less likely to:

- Have ever had sex
- Have 4+ sexual partners
- Be currently sexually active
- Miss school because of safety concerns
- Be forced to have sex
- Use marijuana

More Activity = Greater Impact

LGBTQ+ Supportive School Policies and Practices Protect All Youth

What States Can do to Support Adolescent Mental Health

- Leverage Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) funding
- Develop, implement, and enforce robust, state-wide school enumerated:
  - Anti-bullying policies
  - Non-discrimination policies for students and staff
- Enhance capacity to support the mental health of students and staff
- Strengthen state education agency-based efforts to foster inclusion
- Support youth health data collection (Youth Risk Behavior Survey & School Health Profiles)
Thank You
For More Information

○ Web: www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth
○ Twitter: @CDC_DASH
○ E-mail: nccddashinfo@cdc.gov
○ Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Questions?
Additional Slides
Children’s Behavioral Health and COVID-19

Supporting Children

○ Recognize and address fear and stress
  ○ For adolescents, recognize and address behavior changes
○ Help children stay socially connected through technology
○ Help children remain healthy
  ○ Eat health, drink water, be physically active or learn a new hobby
○ Teach and reinforce everyday prevention actions
  ○ Hand-washing, wearing a mask and staying 6 feet apart from others

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
○ Additional Expertise
  • Behavioral health for adults and children, tobacco and nicotine policies and neonatal abstinence and neonatal opioid withdrawal

○ Additional Resources
  • U.S. Surgeon General Advisory: Protecting Youth Mental Health
  • Health Resource and Services Administration, Bright Future Program Guidelines
  • NCSL, Improving Child and Adolescent Behavioral Health – Coming Soon!
  • NCSL, Enhancing School Capacity to Support Children’s Mental Health
  • Substance Use Disorder Treatment Legislative Database
  • Maternal and Child Health Legislative Database

Thank You!

TammyJo.Hill@ncsl.org