

Mental Health, Acute Stress and Teens

The background is a solid teal color. It features several abstract geometric elements: a large, semi-transparent circle with a smaller circle inside it, both containing a pie chart with a single slice highlighted; several smaller semi-transparent circles, some also containing pie charts; and a bar chart in the bottom right corner with four vertical bars of increasing height.

Recognizing changes in behavior

- Withdrawal from activities or friends they enjoy
- Statements that indicate hopelessness, feelings of worthlessness, or being a burden
- Changes in mood that are out of character
- Change in sleep patterns
- Roles within the family

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=anjajgSxBDI&feature=share>

Figure 2

Share of Adults Reporting Symptoms of Anxiety and/or Depressive Disorder, February 2023

All Adults

All Adults 32.3%

Household Job Loss Status

Household Job Loss 52.8%

No Household Job Loss 29.6%

Age

18-24 49.9%

25-49 38.0%

50-64 29.3%

65+ 20.1%

Sex

Female 36.0%

Male 28.3%

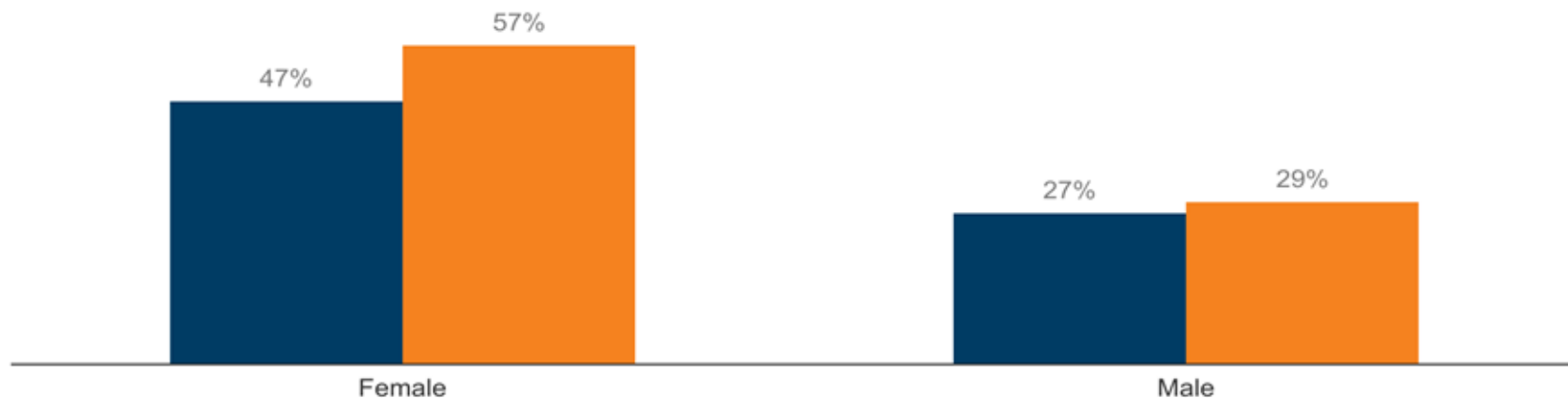
NOTE: Adults having symptoms of depressive or anxiety disorder were determined based on having a score of 3 or more on the Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2) and/or Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2) scale. Household job loss status refers to whether anyone in the respondent's household experienced loss of employment income in the past four weeks.

SOURCE: KFF analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, Household Pulse Survey, 2023

Figure 3

Share of High School Students with Persistent Feelings of Hopelessness and Sadness, Before and During the Pandemic, by Sex

■ 2019 ■ 2021

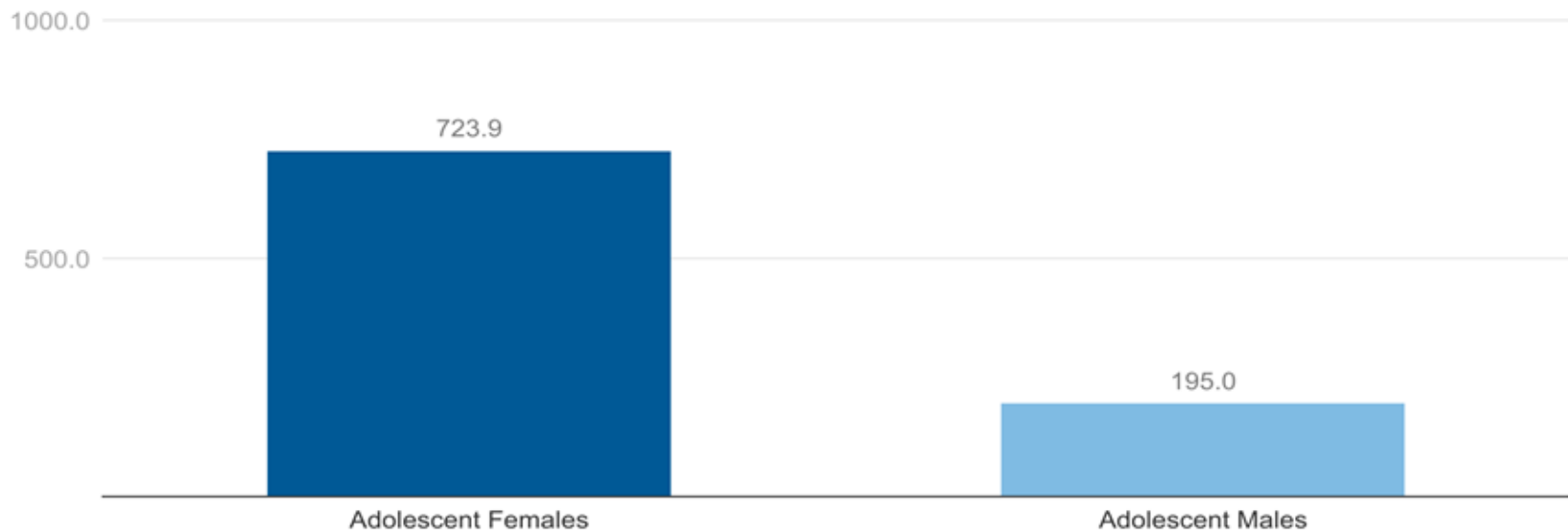


SOURCE: CDC Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Figure 4

Adolescent Females are Significantly More Likely to Self-Harm Than Their Male Peers

Suspected or confirmed self-harm among adolescents (ages 12-17) at emergency department visits per 100,000, by sex, 2020



NOTE: Self-harm includes confirmed or suspected cases of self-injury or poisoning with the intent to harm oneself or take one's own life.

SOURCE: KFF analysis of CDC WISQARS Nonfatal Injury Reports, 2020

Table 2

Share of High School Students Reporting Abuse, Hunger, and Job Loss, By Sex, Race/Ethnicity, and Sexual Identity, 2021

| | Emotional Abuse | Physical Abuse | Parental Job Loss | Hunger |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------|------------|
| Total | 55% | 11% | 29% | 24% |
| Sex | | | | |
| Female | 63% | 12% | 31% | 25% |
| Male | 47% | 11% | 26% | 23% |
| Race/ethnicity | | | | |
| White | 56% | 10% | 24% | 19% |
| Black | 50% | 15% | 25% | 32% |
| Hispanic | 53% | 11% | 38% | 28% |
| Asian | 59% | 13% | 37% | 28% |
| AIAN | 55% | 13% | 16% | 31% |
| Sexual Identity | | | | |
| Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual | 75% | 20% | 35% | 34% |
| Other or Questioning | 76% | 13% | 35% | 33% |
| Heterosexual | 50% | 10% | 27% | 21% |

NOTE: Estimates reflect data from January to June 2021. AIAN refers to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

SOURCE: Krause, K., Verlenden, J., Szucs, L., et al. Disruptions to School and Home Life Among High School Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic - Adolescent Behaviors and Experiences Survey, United States, January–June 2021. MMWR Suppl 2022;71.

Tips: How to ask and how to listen...

- Ask direct questions about daily experiences (getting to and from school, how they feel while in the building at school, specific relationships, etc.).
- Listen without judgement, even when it's challenging.
- Recognize that their experience is real and big for them and try to take time to understand what they share.
- If you don't know how to help with something try on "I don't know how that feels and I'm really glad you shared that with me."
- Creating intentional time with our young people

Resources

- Seize The Awkward - <https://seizetheawkward.org/>
- [Hey Sam](#) - Crisis Support Line for young people by young people (9AM-9PM)
- [988](#) - National Suicide and Crisis Hotline (24 hours a day/Text or Call)
- [Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report: 2011-2021 \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/yrbs_data_summary_and_trends.htm
- https://www.suicideinfo.ca/local_resource/youth-suicide-prevention-2/

FACT SHEET: President Biden to Announce Strategy to Address Our National Mental Health Crisis, As Part of Unity Agenda in his First State of the Union | The White House

In his first State of the Union, the President will outline a unity agenda consisting of policy where there has historically been support from both Republicans and Democrats, and call on Congress to send bills to his desk to deliver progress for the American people. As part of this unity agenda, he will announce a strategy to address our national mental health crisis.

Our country faces an unprecedented mental health crisis among people of all ages. Two out of five adults report symptoms of anxiety or depression. And, Black and Brown communities are disproportionately undertreated – even as their burden of mental illness has continued to rise. Even before the pandemic, rates of depression and anxiety were inching higher. But the grief, trauma, and physical isolation of the last two years have driven Americans to a breaking point.

Our youth have been particularly impacted as losses from COVID and disruptions in routines and relationships have led to increased social isolation, anxiety, and learning loss. More than half of parents express concern over their children’s mental well-being. An early study has found that students are about five months behind in math and four months behind in reading, compared with students prior to the pandemic. In 2019, one in three high school students and half of female students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness, an overall increase of 40 percent from 2009. Emergency department visits for attempted suicide have risen 51 percent among adolescent girls.

This youth mental health crisis has been accentuated by large social media platforms, which for years have been conducting a national experiment on our children and using their data to keep them clicking—with enormous consequences. While technology platforms have improved our lives in some ways, there is mounting evidence that social media is harmful to many kids’ and teens’ mental health, well-being, and development. As the Surgeon-General has said, “when not deployed responsibly and safely, these tools can pit us against each other, reinforce negative behaviors like bullying and exclusion, and undermine the safe and supportive environments young people need and deserve.” In the State of the Union, the President will call on Congress to strengthen privacy protections, ban targeted advertising to children, and demand technology companies stop collecting personal data on our children.

You can be consumed by trauma or informed by trauma

