

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Among Youth Experiencing Homelessness

Many youth experiencing homelessness have a history of trauma. This could be the result of adverse childhood events, such as neglect and abuse. Ultimately, this can cause significant mental health problems, including depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD, suicidal ideation, attachment issues, and substance abuse disorders.^{1,2}

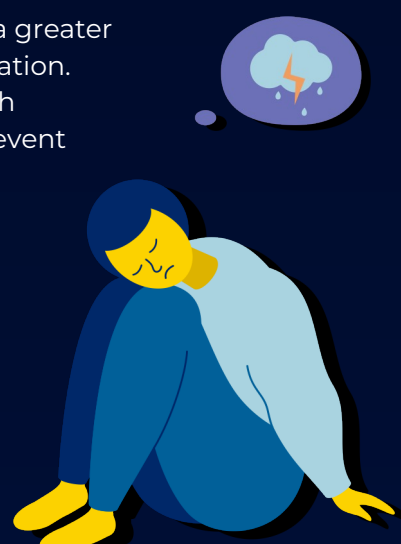
Studies have shown that youth with mental illness are more likely to engage in a greater number of risk behaviors that may increase their vulnerability to violent victimization. Therefore, there is a need for increased awareness and provision of mental health treatment programs to both abate the issue of mental illness and potentially prevent associated outcomes that may predispose youth to becoming homeless.²

ALL YOUTH



Nearly 70% of youth experiencing homelessness report facing mental health difficulties.³

The challenge of youth homelessness and housing instability is more pronounced among youth of color.⁴



Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are

45% more likely

to have **considered suicide** when compared to youth who are stably housed.⁵



Mental health issues **can lead to other struggles** for youth at risk of experiencing homelessness.⁶



Higher school dropout rates



Greater risk for substance use



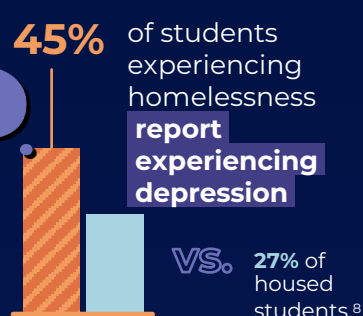
Higher rates of unemployment and informal work



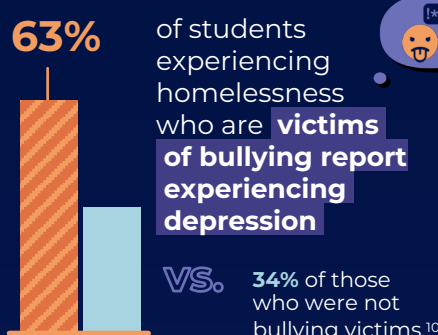
Longer and more frequent bouts of homelessness

STUDENTS

Every public school district (>17,000) designates a **local homeless education liaison** (sometimes referred to as McKinney-Vento liaisons) to serve as their primary homeless education contact.⁷



Students experiencing homelessness reporting depression are **more than 2x** as likely to **binge drink** than housed students reporting depression.⁹



RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS

Successfully identifying and treating mental health issues that youth and young adults are facing is essential to lifelong emotional and mental wellbeing.¹¹

- ✓ Marked fall in school performance
- ✓ Poor grades in school despite trying very hard
- ✓ Severe worry or anxiety, as shown by regular refusal to go to school, go to sleep or take part in activities that are normal for the child's age
- ✓ Frequent physical complaints
- ✓ Marked changes in sleeping and/or eating habits
- ✓ Extreme difficulties in concentrating that get in the way at school or home
- ✓ Sexual acting out
- ✓ Depression shown by sustained, prolonged negative mood and attitude, often accompanied by poor appetite, difficulty sleeping or thoughts of death
- ✓ Severe mood swings
- ✓ Strong worries/anxieties that get in the way of daily life



MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

These resources provide strategies that youth serving organizations can use to **support youth** who are experiencing homelessness and mental health challenges.

Click the links below visit the source:

- ☀ [How to Address Mental Health for Students Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- ☀ [Complex Trauma: Facts for Service Providers Working with Homeless Youth and Young Adults](#)
- ☀ [Issue Brief: Trauma-Informed Care for the Full Range of RHY Services](#)
- ☀ [Youth.gov — RHY and Behavioral Health](#)

If you are experiencing an emotional crisis, use these FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES



Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

Call or Text 988 for free and confidential counseling 24/7 for those in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.



National Runaway Safeline

Visit 1800runaway.org to connect via chat or call 1-800-runaway (1-800-786-2929).



SAMHSA National Helpline

Call 800-662-4357 for free, confidential, 24/7 treatment referral and information service (in English and Spanish) for people facing mental and/or substance use disorders.



Trevor Project

Text "START" to 678678 or call 866-488-7386 for free counseling support 24/7.