

A WORK IN PROGRESS: INSIDE THE TEEN BRAIN

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH BASICS

25+

Average
age of full brain
development



Brain Buster

The last part of the brain to develop is the frontal lobe- the part of the brain that controls reasoning, logic, and impulses.

This means that youth are more likely to:

- Act on impulses and/or emotions
- Speak their mind
- Not consider the consequences
- Take risks/engage in risky behavior
- Have one-track thinking: it is all about me



One out of every four children in the US receives the mental health support they need.

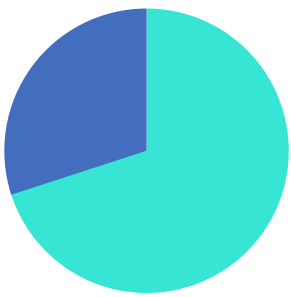
Mental Health Warning Signs in youth

- Loss of interest
- Isolation
- Feelings of anger or anxiety
- Difficulty managing emotions
- Problems with sleeping



- Obsessive behaviors
- Substance use
- Aggressive behavior
- Thoughts of harming themselves or others
- Hearing voices
- Changes in personality

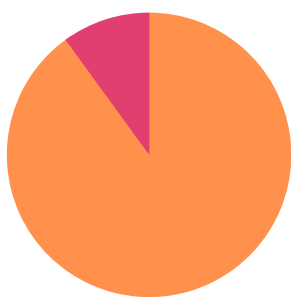
Other youth
30%



System youth
70%

Approximately 70% of youth entering the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable behavioral health disorder.

No trauma history
10%



Trauma history
90%

Approximately 90% of youth entering the juvenile justice system have exposure to trauma.

TRAUMA

An event or set of events that cause an individual to feel intensely threatened either due to direct involvement or indirect involvement as a witness.

Intentional events

Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)
Domestic violence

Other events

Accidents
Natural disasters & war
Sudden death of a loved one

REACTIONS/RESPONSES TO TRAUMA
CAN BE IMMEDIATE OR DELAYED.

Trauma Warning Signs

- Feelings of sadness, anxiety, or anger
- Trouble concentrating, sleeping
- Physical symptoms (stomach aches, headaches, easily startled)
- Showing signs of fear

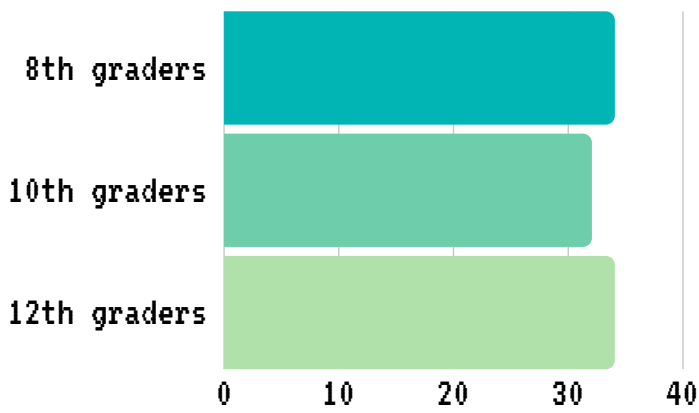


IMPROVING THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

TIPS FOR PARENTS & CAREGIVERS

Talking to kids so they listen & listening to kids so they talk

- Maintain open and honest communication with your child
- Ask questions, take interest in your child's life
- Model appropriate communication and management of emotions
- Establish an environment where youth can open up about any struggles
- Listen and try to understand, rather than dismissing or lecturing
- Be open to compromise if there is room to negotiate
- Reflect back what you heard the other person say



Illinois Youth Survey data from 2018 shows that over 30% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders in Kane County schools identified feeling symptoms of depression (sadness, hopelessness) during the previous 12 months.

Say what you mean, mean what you say

- Establish trust by following through on what you say
- Provide consistency in expectations
- Teach commitment and offer clarity

Prevent explosions

- Know the warning signs that youth is getting escalated
- Disengage from the conversation when warning signs appear and take a break
- Prompt youth to take a break, practice a coping skill
- May have to leave the situation if the youth keeps trying to engage
- Avoid following when someone is taking a break
- Can return to the conversation later
- Do not address things when youth is already upset or under the influence

When flight attendants explain how to use the oxygen masks on airplanes, they tell passengers to put on their own oxygen mask before helping anyone else, including children.



Similarly, parents and caregivers should make sure they have resolved their own emotions before addressing any concerns with their children.

Resources

Kane County Behavioral Health Services Portal

Resource guide about behavioral health services in Kane County
www.wesupportmentalhealth.org

United Way - 211 line

A 24 hour non-emergency telephone number that connects people with essential community information and services

SASS - Screening, Assessment, and Support Services

County-wide mental health crisis response for youth
1-800-345-9049

CCBYS - Comprehensive Community Based Youth Services

Crisis response and intervention services for youth and families.
(708) 679-8100

NAMI - National Alliance on Mental Illness

Advocacy, education, and support individuals living with mental illness and their families
www.nami.org

"Parenting isn't a practice, it is a daily learning experience"
- Unknown -

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