

## HELPFUL RESOURCES

Houston Health Department  
[www.houstontx.gov/health](http://www.houstontx.gov/health)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
[www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/mentalhealth)

Crisis Intervention of Houston  
[www.crisishotline.org](http://www.crisishotline.org)

DePelchin Children's Center  
[www.depelchin.org](http://www.depelchin.org)

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance Houston (DBSA)  
[www.dbsahouston.org](http://www.dbsahouston.org)

Disability Rights Texas  
[www.disabilityrightstx.org](http://www.disabilityrightstx.org)

Doctors For Change  
[www.doctorsforchange.org](http://www.doctorsforchange.org)

Hogg Foundation for Mental Health  
[www.hogg.utexas.edu](http://www.hogg.utexas.edu)

Mental Health America of Greater Houston  
[www.mhahouston.org](http://www.mhahouston.org)

National Alliance on Mental Illness-Greater Houston (NAMI)  
[www.namigreaterhouston.org](http://www.namigreaterhouston.org)

National Institute of Mental Health  
[www.nimh.nih.gov](http://www.nimh.nih.gov)

Mental Health & Mental Retardation of Harris County  
[www.mhmraofharriscounty.org](http://www.mhmraofharriscounty.org)

The Montrose Center  
[www.montrosecenter.org](http://www.montrosecenter.org)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)  
[www.samsha.gov](http://www.samsha.gov)

Texas Suicide Prevention  
[www.texasuicideprevention.org](http://www.texasuicideprevention.org)

U.S Department of Health and Human Services Office of Adolescent Health  
<http://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/>

## GET INVOLVED!<sup>15, 16, 17, 18</sup>

### Youth

- If you are angry, worried or sad, don't be afraid to talk about your feelings and reach out to a trusted friend or adult.
- Avoid using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs. These products often make situations worse rather than better.

### Parents

- Notice warning signs of mental health problems. Warning signs are not one-time occurrences, rather, they persist over several weeks.
- Talk to your child's health care professional if you have concerns about the way your child behaves at home, in school, or with friends.

### School Personnel

- If you see any of the warning signs, talk to the teen. Ask how he or she is doing, and be compassionate as you listen and respond.
- Make sure to share what you've seen and heard with someone who can help the teen such as the teen's parents, a mental health professional or general health professional at school or in the community.
- Implement school education programs to train adults to notice the warning signs of mental health problems.

### Community

- Establish partnerships that facilitate dissemination and successful implementation of evidence-based prevention strategies to promote positive mental health behaviors.
- Build community receptivity, capacity, and competence to implement evidence-based approaches to the promotion of positive mental health behaviors.

## References and More!

Please visit <http://www.houstontx.gov/health/hdhhs-profiles> for a full list of references.

## Other Titles in this Series:

- Teen Pregnancy & Prevention
- Youth Sexual Health/STIs/HIV
- Youth Violence Prevention
- Teen Dating Violence Prevention
- Youth Immunizations
- Youth Suicide Prevention
- Youth Obesity & Prevention
- Youth Substance Abuse & Prevention
- Youth Bullying & Prevention
- Youth Homelessness
- Overall Summary of Teen Health Profiles

For more information, please contact Adolescent Health and Injury Prevention (AHIP) via the Houston Youth Voice, Health, Safety Coalition at: [4youthvoice@houstontx.gov](mailto:4youthvoice@houstontx.gov)  
Facebook: [4youthvoicehouston](https://www.facebook.com/4youthvoicehouston) Twitter: [@4youthvoice](https://twitter.com/4youthvoice)

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## YOUTH IN HOUSTON & HARRIS COUNTY<sup>1,3</sup>

### Population\*

Houston: 601,918 (29%)  
Harris County: 1,263,889 (31%)

### Poverty

Children under 18 living below poverty level:  
Houston: 35.3%  
Harris County: 27.4%

### Education

High School Graduates (ages 18-24):  
Houston: 29.3%  
Harris County: 30.5%

## DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT OF YOUTH<sup>1,4</sup>

Below is a snapshot of the demographics for youth living in Houston and Harris County.

### Gender

Houston:	Harris County:
Male: 51%	Male: 51%
Female: 49%	Female: 49%

### Age

Houston:	Harris County:
Under 5 years: 28%	27%
5 to 9 years: 25%	25%
10 to 14 years: 23%	24%
15 to 19 years: 24%	24%

### Race/Ethnicity

Harris County:  
Hispanic: 51%  
White: 23%  
Black: 19%  
Other: 7%

\* Percentages (youth under the age of 19) are representative of the total Houston/Harris County population.  
<sup>†</sup> As of 2010, percentages are based on total population of Houston and/or Harris County under the age of 19.

YOUTH  
voice health safety

Adolescent Health and Injury Prevention (AHIP)

# YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Profile of the City of Houston & Harris County, Texas

Harris County's population is projected to reach 4.5 million residents by 2020.<sup>5</sup> Texas has the highest rate of medically uninsured citizens among the states; specifically, Texas is ranked last in per capita mental health funding compared to other states. Additionally, Harris County is ranked 30th out of 34 among community mental health centers in per capita mental health funding. The shortfall in available mental health services for Harris County residents will only worsen as the population grows.

A mental illness is a condition that impacts a person's thinking, feeling or mood affecting his or her ability to relate to others and function on a daily basis. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.<sup>6</sup>

**50%** of all chronic mental illness begins by age 14 years and **75%** by 24 years.<sup>7</sup>

Some mental health **"red flags" you should be alert for include:**<sup>8</sup>

- Excessive sleeping, beyond usual teenage fatigue, which could indicate depression or substance abuse; difficulty in sleeping, insomnia and other sleep disorders.
- Loss of self-esteem.
- Abandonment or loss of interest in favorite activities.
- Unexpected and dramatic decline in academic performance.
- Weight loss and loss of appetite which could indicate an eating disorder.
- Personality shifts and changes, such as aggressiveness and excess anger that are sharply out of character and could indicate psychological, drug or sexual problems.

**Consequences** of untreated mental illness may include:<sup>9</sup>

1. School failure or dropout
2. Juvenile detention or criminal justice involvement
3. Victimization
4. Acute psychiatric crises, including suicide
5. Unemployment
6. Homelessness

"With medication, psychotherapy, or combined treatment, most youth with depression can be effectively treated. Youth are more likely to respond to treatment if they receive it early in the course of their illness." - National Institute of Mental Health

## HARRIS COUNTY DATA<sup>9</sup>

Of the 750,000 children and adolescents in Harris County between the ages of 6 and 18 (2010 Census), nearly **150,000** have a mental illness.

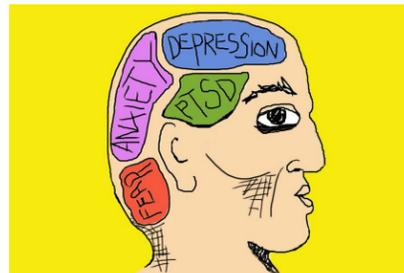
⇒ Of those **89,162** have a **serious emotional disturbance**, which includes but is not limited to anxiety, bipolar, depression and eating disorders.

In 2012, **19,300** children and adolescents with serious emotional disturbance needed services from the public mental health system

⇒ Of those **74%** received none.

⇒ 186,000 children living in Harris County have a mental condition that requires treatment.

Almost **69%** of children referred to the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department have a diagnosable mental health condition.



## ISSUES IN MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT<sup>9</sup>

- Insufficient funding for the medically uninsured.
- Treatment facilities do not have enough capacity to meet needs.
- De-compensation into crises or incarceration due to lack of financial means.
- Harris County's loss of access to state-funded inpatient care.
- Less access to private care.
- Lack of integrated care with other health care areas such as substance abuse.

## MENTAL HEALTH<sup>10 11</sup>

30% of children who experience a traumatic event develop **Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)**.<sup>10</sup>

**Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder** is one of the most common mental disorders in children, affecting **11%** of youth.<sup>11</sup>

Each year, approximately 3% of US adolescents are affected by an eating disorder, such as **anorexia and bulimia**.<sup>12</sup>

A total of 13%-20% of youth living in the United States experience a mental disorder in any given year.<sup>13</sup>

## WHAT WORKS?

The programs listed below are a compilation of initiatives, campaigns, and programs that are research informed, apply best practices and have the potential to be implemented in various settings. Below are some examples of these types of programs for mental health issues.

Program	What Is It?	Website
<b>Adolescent Coping with Depression (CWD—A)*</b>	The Adolescent Coping with Depression course is a cognitive behavioral group intervention that targets specific problems typically experienced by depressed adolescents. These problems include discomfort and anxiety, irrational/negative thoughts, poor social skills, and limited experiences of pleasant activities.	<a href="http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=11">http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=11</a>
<b>Behavior Management through Adventure*</b>	Behavior Management through Adventure is a form of outdoor therapy for youth with behavioral, psychological, and learning disabilities; students excluded from school for disciplinary reasons; and juvenile offenders.	<a href="http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=260">http://www.nrepp.samhsa.gov/ViewIntervention.aspx?id=260</a>
<b>Multisystemic Therapy (MST)*</b>	A family- and community-based treatment serving youth with intensive needs related to violence, substance abuse and mental illness. Treatment addresses the environmental systems which impact functioning.	<a href="http://mstservices.com/">http://mstservices.com/</a>
<b>Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)*</b>	Mental Health First Aid is a public education program designed to improve knowledge and modify perceptions around mental health. Risk factors, warning signs and treatment options are discussed. MHFA helps communities to better understand mental illness and seek services early.	<a href="http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/">http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/</a>

\*Denotes evidence based program as listed by SAMSHA—National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices

## Recommendations:<sup>9</sup>

1. Realign resources from crisis services to preventative and ongoing care.
2. Support integrated care for individuals with behavioral health conditions.
3. Integrate mental health with related services such as housing and residential services.
4. Increase number of mental health professionals.
5. Support local control and accountability for public mental health services.
6. Provide ongoing training and support to service providers on the impacts of trauma in youth/young adults and how to provide appropriate support.



## Related Policies and Policy Implications:<sup>14</sup>

**Senate Bill 831** requires the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to provide and annually update a list of recommended best practice programs in mental health, substance abuse, and suicide prevention that may be selected for implementation by public schools.

**House Bill 3793** amends the Health and Safety Code to authorize a local mental health authority to ensure provision of treatment services to children and adults with a diagnosed mental health condition. Through this bill, DSHS mandates each local mental health authority to reduce involvement in the criminal justice system.