



## **Mental Health is a significant struggle...**

Globally 7 in 10 people reports that they are struggling or suffering and CDC reports that 41.5% of U.S. adults exhibited symptoms of anxiety or depression in early 2021. Anxiety and depression can destroy ideas, energy and eventually the economy -- and especially small businesses, which is where almost 50% of us are employed. Yet these aren't taken as seriously as physical wellbeing because we understand physical problems so much better than mental problems.

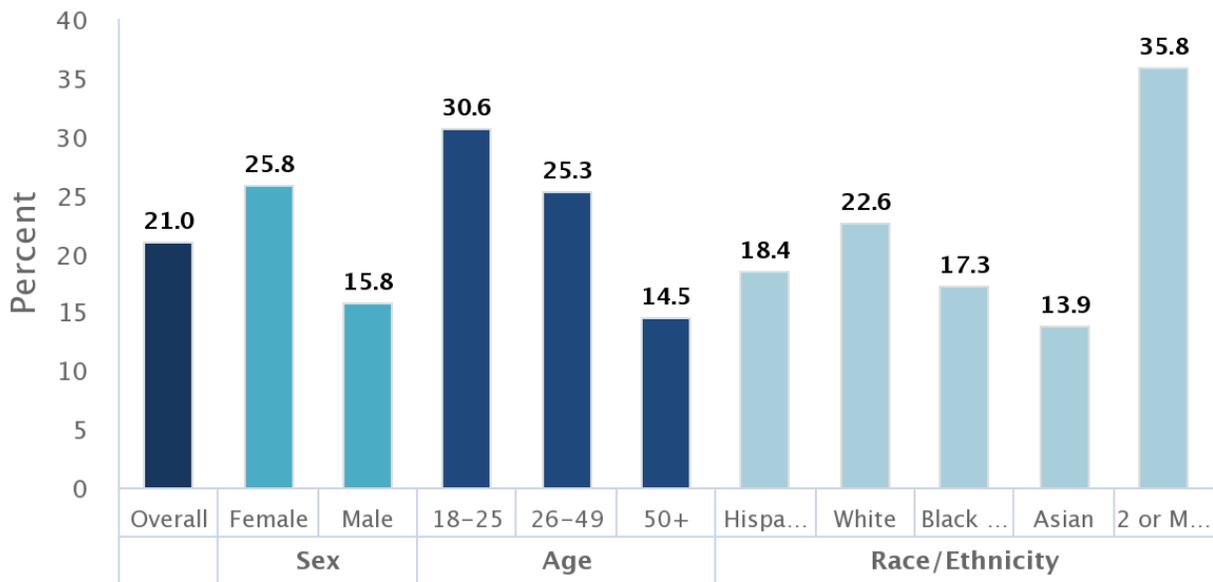
**"Mental Health is the new global pandemic" and it's here!**

The mental health of America's young people was a major national concern before COVID-19. More than 1 in 3 high school students had experienced persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness in 2019, a 40 percent increase since 2009. Now it's reached crisis stage. As a nation, it's past time to prioritize youth mental health and provide young people with the support they need. All our young people deserve the opportunity to seek appropriate treatment, put themselves back on the path to wellbeing and fulfill their incredible potential.

## Prevalence of Any Mental Illness among U.S. Adults

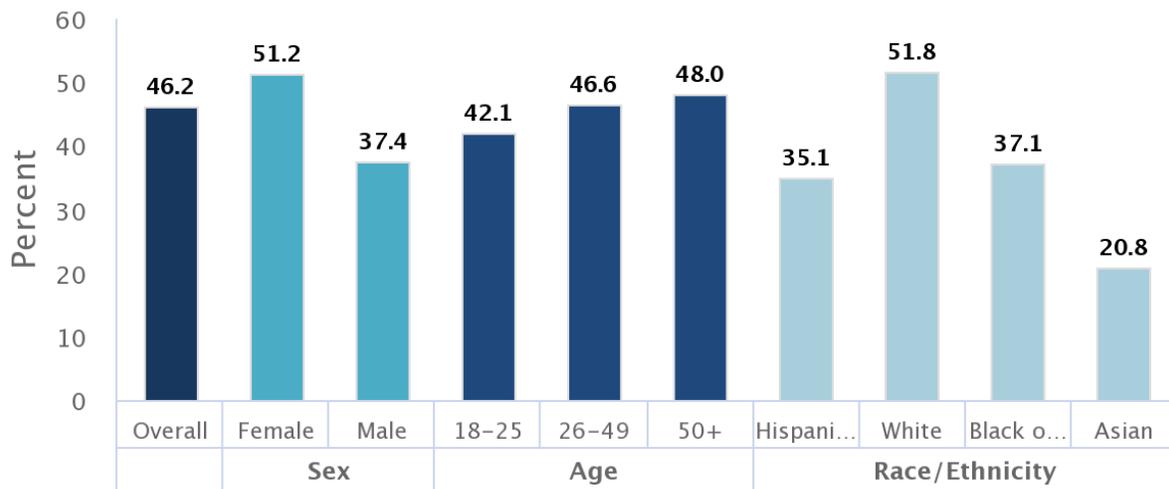
Past Year Prevalence of Any Mental Illness Among U.S. Adults (2020)

Data Courtesy of SAMHSA



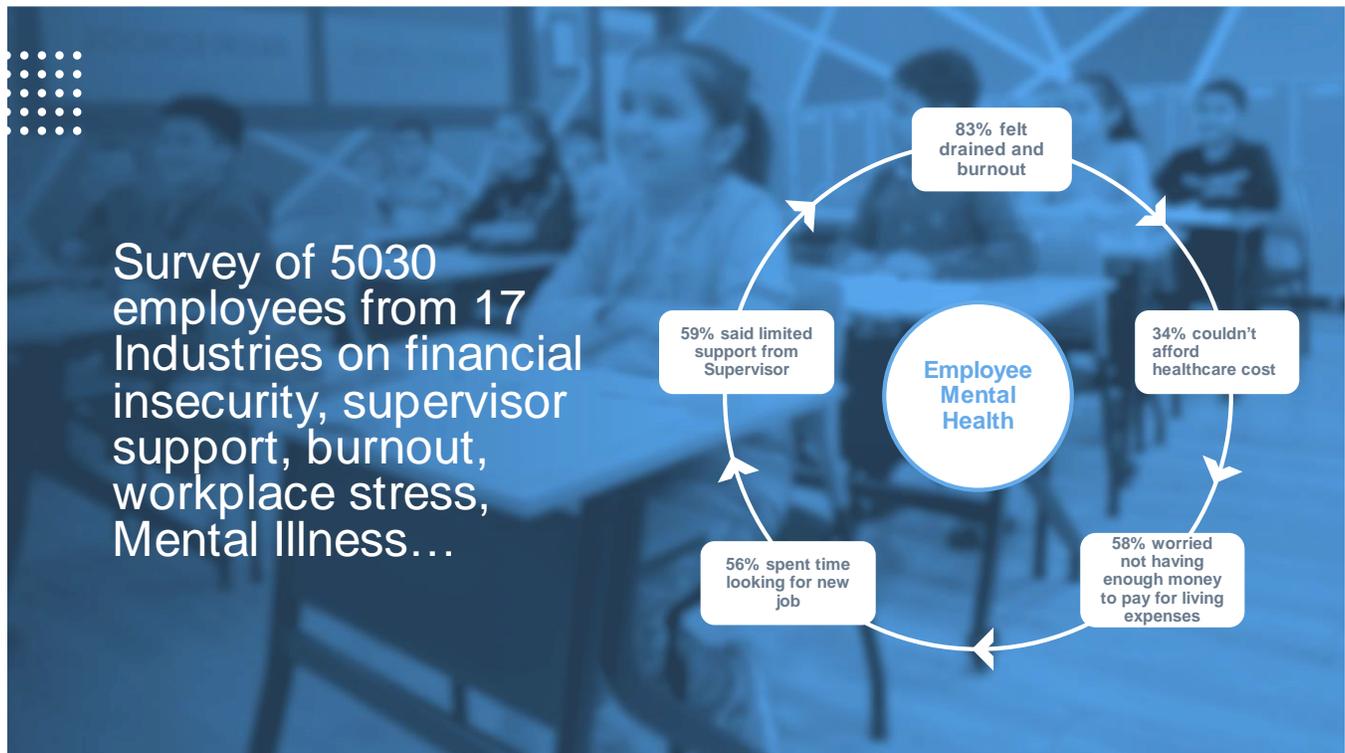
Mental Health Services Received in Past Year Among U.S. Adults with Any Mental Illness (2020)

Data Courtesy of SAMHSA



## Mental Health for employees and small businesses

According to data supplied by the American Psychiatric Association, **employees with unresolved depression experience a 35% reduction in productivity**, contributing to a loss to the U.S. economy of \$210.5 billion a year in absenteeism, reduced productivity, and medical cost.



While technology is improving access to mental health services, it also contributes to more mental illness in general. Because people spend so much time using devices, they're less likely to have meaningful social interactions.

While the data about depression and productivity loss is dramatic, the good news is that mental illness—depression in particular—is treatable. With proper care, including therapy, skill building, and medication, 80% of employees treated for mental illness report improved levels of work effectiveness and satisfaction.

Employers must move from seeing mental health as an individual challenge to a collective priority. Given all the workplace factors at play, companies can no longer compartmentalize mental health as an individual's responsibility to address alone through self-care, mental health days, or employee benefits.

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## School-based mental health program

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Increased isolation  
and decreased  
social interactions



School-based mental health is becoming a vital part of student support systems. Mentally healthy students are more likely to go to school ready to learn, actively engage in school activities, have supportive and caring connections with adults and young people, use appropriate problem-solving skills, have nonaggressive behaviors, and add to positive school culture.

The ways school districts implement school-based mental health services vary. They may hire school-based therapists or social workers. They can provide access to prevention programming, early identification of mental health challenges, and treatment options. By removing barriers such as transportation, scheduling conflicts and stigma, school-based mental health services can help students access needed services during the school-day.

### “Funding for school-based program is limited!”

Many public schools offer mental health services to students, although utilization remains unclear. In the 2021-2022 school year, public schools reported offering at least one type of mental health service to their students. As shown in Figure 1, the most frequently offered services are:

- Student counsellors,
- Case management or coordinating mental health services, and
- Referrals for care outside of the school.

Less than one-third of schools provide outreach services, which includes mental health screenings for all students. These universal behavioral health screenings are considered a best practice and allow for schools to better identify all students with needs and tailor services to their specific student population. However, many schools do not offer these screenings often due to a lack of resources or difficulty accessing providers to conduct screenings, burden of collecting and maintaining data, and/or a lack of buy-in from school administrators.

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## Help for Mental Health - Proactive Approach is warranted!

To tackle our current mental health pandemic, a proactive approach is needed. Need to start thinking of being ahead of the game. Awareness, Access and Affordable (at no cost) will have the highest impact.

“It’s often a last-minute crisis helpline! Can we get ahead of the game?”

Get Immediate Help in a Crisis. **Call 911** if you or someone you know is in immediate danger or go to the nearest emergency room.

### 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

**Call or text 988; Llame al 988 (para ayuda en español) or Use [Lifeline Chat](#) on the web**

The Lifeline provides 24-hour, confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. Call or text 988 to connect with a trained crisis counselor. Support is also available in English via [live chat](#).

### Crisis Text Line

**Text “HELLO” to 741741**

The Crisis Text hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the U.S. The Crisis Text Line serves anyone, in any type of crisis, connecting them with a crisis counselor who can provide support and information.

### Veterans Crisis Line

**Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text to 838255 or Use [Veterans Crisis Chat](#) on the web**

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that connects veterans 24 hours a day, seven days a week with a trained responder. The service is available to all veterans, even if they are not registered with the VA or enrolled in VA healthcare.

### Disaster Distress Helpline

**Call or text 1-800-985-5990**

The disaster distress helpline provides immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. The helpline is free, multilingual, confidential, and available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**National Agencies and Advocacy and Professional Organizations:** Advocacy and professional organizations can be a good source of information when looking for a mental health provider. They often have information on finding a mental health professional on their website, and some have practitioner locators on their websites.

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## Awareness, Access, and Affordable Mental Health.

This increase in the prevalence of mental health problems has coincided with severe disruptions to mental health services, leaving huge gaps in care for those who need it most. For much of the pandemic, services for mental, neurological and substance use conditions were the most disrupted among all essential health services.

“Stigma of mental health impacts one’s ability to seek care and let alone access to care is limited!”

More than one third of Americans live in area where mental health providers are scarce. Many providers also still operate outside the health insurance system, so for patients, they are out of network, which is expensive. Even with the number of psychiatrists and psychologists out there...there’s nobody for people to go to. Indeed, just 56% of psychiatrists accept commercial insurance compared to 90% of other, non-mental health physicians.

Affordable and access to mental health is vital to improve delivery of care and this can be made possible with improving coverage for services while funding initiatives that will make care accessible and affordable.

- Improving awareness of services in environments such as schools, colleges, workplace is vital and encouraging every individual to participate will remove stigma associated with mental illness.
- Insurance should allow out of pocket cost for seeking mental health as part of reimbursable expense.
- Employers should consider mental health benefits through employee assistance program to make care more affordable at low cost or even free.
- Schools should seek funding for having clinical counselors to screen and evaluate every child in the school to diagnose and treat problems early.
- Access to teletherapy and promotion of such platform in remote areas where mental health is scarce.

“Funding Initiatives to tackle problems proactively will reduce burden and improve access to mental health”