



MENTAL HEALTH FACTS

How common are mental health issues?

- ◆ According to the CDC, half of all Americans will experience a serious mental health challenge in their lifetime—**1 in 5 will experience it before adulthood**. In Mississippi, we estimate that to be approximately **131,000 kids**.
- ◆ Common mental health diagnoses for kids include: **attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), behavior or conduct disorders, major depression, anxiety, Tourette's Syndrome obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**. (*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*)
- ◆ Half of all behavioral health concerns **onset before the age of 14** (*National Institute of Mental Health*)
- ◆ Suicide is the **second leading cause of death** among teens and adolescents—90 percent had an underlying behavioral health crisis at the time of death (*National Alliance on Mental Illness, 2017*)
- ◆ **1.3 million American youth** struggle with drug or alcohol dependency (*Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*)
- ◆ Mental health disorders are commonly associated with an individual's exposure to **Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)**. Toxic stress from **ACEs can change brain development and affect how the body responds to stress**.
 - ◆ ACEs are linked to **chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood**. **One in six adults experienced 4 or more ACEs during childhood**. (*CDC Vital Signs, 2019*)
- ◆ **Fewer than 20 percent** of children who face behavioral health challenges ever **receive proper treatment** (*American Psychological Association*)

What is defined as a mental health challenge?

- ◆ Sadness, worry, fear or anger are normal feelings, but when they get in the way of our ability to function in our daily lives, that's when it crosses over into something more serious.
- ◆ Most people are able to recover from mental health challenges with proper treatment. Those who receive **early intervention care** for mental health often have better outcomes long-term than those who postpone accessing appropriate help.

What causes mental health problems?

- ◆ It can be caused by an **exposure to trauma** such as abuse or neglect or even living through and extremely frightening situation like a natural disaster.
- ◆ It can be **genetic**.
- ◆ It can also be **environmental** in an instance where a child doesn't feel safe or has concerns about meeting basic needs such as food or shelter.
- ◆ Each of these can potentially result in a mental health challenge of varying degrees.

What happens if a mental health challenge isn't addressed?

- ◆ **Everyone is different; however, untreated mental health challenges can cause bigger problems**. When a mental illness goes untreated, it is harder to treat and there can be a steady decline in mental health. Neglecting one's

mental health and refusing to treat one form of mental health disorder can lead to the development of other mental health disorders, such as major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders, etc.

- ◆ Mental illness and chronic stress are associated with an increased risk to develop various medical conditions, such as **obesity, cardiovascular issues (e.g., heart attack, stroke, etc.), gastrointestinal issues, increased risk for diseases like cancer, and premature death.**

If your child needs support for mental health issues, please call 800.388.6247.