

The State of Mental Health in America's Youth Today

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Youth Mental Health and the Transition to High School

Dianne Lundy was in her first year of high school as she just switched from her middle school when she started feeling nervous oftentimes. Switching from middle to high school was a major transition she had gone through as she felt herself physically apart from her peers and beloved teachers. In high school, she always felt reluctant to seek help from her fellow students and teachers when she could not find a solution to a math problem. She became also frustrated with herself realizing that she was not able to figure it out on her own. Dianne's feelings of anxiety persisted, and she used to feel a knot in her stomach and a tingling sensation in her hands for hours before an exam. Whether it was from anxiety, depression, or stress, the state of Dianne's mental health had grown steadily worse as she was always in a worried kind of state. She definitely felt difficult navigating all those things making her anxious in high school as well as in her home.

To address these overwhelming feelings of Dianne, the topic selected for this paper is "The State of Mental Health in America's Youth Today". The purpose of this paper is to report feelings of depression and anxiety among young people in the United States. The paper explores the statistics as well as promotes the awareness that the crisis of mental health among US youth is real and it is still staggering as 70 out of every 100 teens today are personally suffering from depression, anxiety, and stress or see these problems among their peers. Children and teens are particularly likely to report feelings of suicide, depression, anxiety, sadness, and helplessness. This has raised the thoughts of suicide among them, the rate of suicide attempts and actual suicides among the youth of America. The present research also builds on the measures the US government across the states have taken to address and mitigate this challenge in the youth of the United States who have been suffering for far longer.

The research in this paper proceeds to address the critical issue of mental health among young people in the United States that has garnered increasing attention in recent years. It is divided into three sections. Each part indicates that a significant number of young people suffer from major mental health issues including depressive episodes, with the prevalence of anxiety, depression, and stress on the rise. The first part discusses the rising upheaval of the feelings of sadness, helplessness, or hopelessness that is evident in the young generation of today's United States. The second part discusses the statistics in order to promote awareness among the target readers that the mental health issue is real and young people are in dire need of considering their ways of living their lives.

Lastly, the third part of the research builds on the measures the US government has taken and should take to mitigate the challenges and issues the young generation is trying to struggle with.

Adolescence and Psychological Vulnerability

Turning to part one of the essay, I would like to state that, usually, children experience mental health problems such as loneliness, anxiety, fears, or depressive episodes during their adolescence age which starts with puberty and can stretch to age from 18 to 20. The first part of the present research will answer questions about why the age of adolescence is significant in garnering mental health issues as well as how and why these problems are prevalent in the young generation of the US society. To begin with, adolescence is the period which observes issues ranging from anxiety and depression to mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, dementia, or bipolar disorder that tend to emerge at a later age. The time period of adolescence is the time when the brains of young people grow, and their growth enables them of higher-order thinking and reasoning. Moreover, it is the time frame when new connections are formed between different parts of the brain to make individuals capable of reasoning. However, sometimes, these connections also make young people more prone to negative “thought loops” that lead to sadness and worry. Psychologists believe that these loops if start younger last longer becoming the entrenched patterns with the passage of time.

Another reason why mental health issues are so prevalent in young people is that children go through major social changes during their adolescence as they experience growing academic pressure, form new friendships, develop a new sense of self-identity, and increasingly compare themselves to other people around them especially their peers in school settings and cousins in their families. This comparison often leads to emphasizing negative characteristics of depression over petty things. Different parts of the brain are in the process of developing in this age and there is a biological mismatch between how the body develops and how society nurtures it according to its own expectations and regulations. Thus, mental health issues have deep roots in the process of brain development and social needs of a teenage or adolescent’s body.

Discrimination, Technology, and Emerging Risk Factors

Furthermore, young people experiencing racial discrimination and exploitation at schools and early days of their college life can make them more vulnerable to mental health problems in the US society which is an amalgam of many nationalities and ethnicities. In recent years, the proliferation of advanced technology such as social media in their hands has helped them have easier access to information without any age-restrictive content such as gun violence, racial injustice, and international climate change disasters can easily make someone stressed (House).

Turning to part two of the research, this section will build on the first part through statistics and

answer questions about the demographics of the young generation of the United States coping with mental health issues and the undeniable evidence that mobile phones and social media are the sole cause of mental health problems and illnesses among the young population of the US society. According to the Pew Research Center survey, every 55 in 100 teens are being bullied, 51 out of 100 have drug addiction, and 70 out of 100 have anxiety and depression due to racial exploitation, socioeconomic differences, and identity crises due to gender problems they experience in their everyday lives (Graf).

Although no appropriate data is found, there is a piece of undeniable evidence that the use of mobile phones and social media has significantly contributed to mental health problems in teenage and adolescent kids. Despite no data, the increasingly rising rate of depression, anxiety, stress, and suicidal thoughts among the young generation of the US society in the recent decade provides evidence that children are getting affected by the “sensational” and “harmful” content available online without any restriction. Many social media platforms promote their nefarious designs through manipulative techniques such as the LGBTQ+ agenda which leads to more and more children affecting which results in harming their mental health. Many other platforms using manipulative words and designs attract young people towards drugs promoting the addictive and compulsive use of illicit drugs in their schools and in the company of their friends which not only disrupt their senses and learning but also affect their mental health. Advances in technology have further worsened the situation as children have now access to digital spaces that do not restrict or protect minor adolescents from the abuses people experience online such as hate comments even when alerted to such digital platforms.

Government and School-Based Mental Health Interventions

Finally, turning to section three of the research, this part will explore some measures that the US government has taken to save children’s lives and answer queries related to the ways that can improve the state of children’s mental health. School and early college life are the spaces where children, teenagers, and adolescent kids spend their time the most. The US government has recommended middle schools and high schools step up their array of mental health services by addressing children’s existing mental health issues and by bringing treatment into the hands of psychologists and professionals to help young people.

For this to be achieved, schools can implement a variety of strategies within their realms including education and information related to mental health as well as screenings to help young children recognize and manage their emotions. Schools, therefore, are a big part of the solutions to mental health problems as young people through such initiatives at schools can access help which they might otherwise have trouble accessing at home. The task force of psychologists recommends mental health and anxiety screenings for children ages 12 to 20 as preventive health services (“Kids’ Mental

Health Is in Crisis. Here's What Psychologists Are Doing to Help"). In recent years, Biden and the US administration have explored ways to improve the healthcare sector to enhance the improvement in clinical training to restructure rules and regulations in order to support and disseminate solutions to vulnerable young people, families, schools, and care facilities at the state level (House).

In conclusion, mental health issues among teenage and adolescent children are a real and widespread concern in the US society that is not only impacting the mental health of kids negatively but also their physical health as they are prone towards committing suicide due to high levels of anxiety and depression. The paper, divided into three sections, explores the problem and reasons behind it, statistics of the problem, and the efforts the US government and concerned authorities have taken or should take to save the future of the United States. If preventive measures were not taken in time, the state of mental health in America's youth would likely continue to deteriorate with long-term consequences for young people and the US society as a whole.

Works Cited

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