

Mental Health Impacts on Vermont Children and Youth

Supporting Vermont's Education Recovery

Current Mental Health Impact – Vermont Trends

PACE Study

- Youth (12-17) reported significantly more depressive symptoms in Fall 2020 than in Fall 2019
- Reported anxiety among youth (12-17) was elevated in Fall 2020 compared to Fall 2019
- Reported anxiety in young adults (18-25 years) was significantly higher in Fall 2020 compared to Fall 2019, and mirrored the trend among youth
- Around 70% of youth reported that the COVID-19 pandemic made their anxiety/worry, mood or loneliness “a little” or “a lot” worse



Current Mental Health Impact – Vermont Trends

School Based Mental Health Services Data

- Students assessed using the Child and Adolescent Needs and at Strengths (CANS) in FY20
 - 59% of children and youth identified as lacking community connection
 - 48% of children and youth identified as lacking optimism

Mental Health-Related Emergency Department Visits in Vermont Youth

- In 2020, the rate of youth ED visits for mental health-related concerns increased

Current Mental Health Impact – Vermont Trends

- Pediatric Emergency Physician – *“ The adolescent age children are struggling. There are increased number of emergency department visits for acute mental health needs”*
- Primary Care Pediatrician – *“My practice has 11 mental health providers that we contract with. In September, we had no waitlist – now we have 70+ on the waitlist. 75%-80% of what I see every day is mental health related in the last 6-9 months”*
- Primary Care Pediatrician – *“The children are NOT okay. Every single day the bulk of my time in pediatrics is spent managing mental health concerns of kids between the ages of 11 and 18”*

Schools Matter: Access to Services & Supports

- In CY2020, 48% of Medicaid members (0-18) received mental services in a school during CY2020
 - Total Medicaid Members (0-18) who received Mental Health Services: 24,205
 - Total Medicaid Members (0-18) who received those services in a school location: 11,548
- The number of students served through school based mental health in the 2019/2020 school year increased 13% over the prior year
- Department for Children and Families has seen a 21% decrease in calls to Centralized Intake and Emergency Services (CIES) between 2019 and 2020



Current Mental Health Impact – Youth Voice

- The pandemic has taken a serious toll on youth, causing significant learning loss, social isolation, stress, and trauma.
- Young people need to feel safe and supported to re-engage in learning and recover from this period of loss and isolation.
- Vermont's youth need not only academic support, but also social and emotional support. They need help sustaining and rebuilding relationships, talking about their experiences and emotions, developing as leaders and agents of change, and re-engaging with their interests.
- They need time with friends, teachers, and mentors; opportunities for creative enrichment and expression; healthy meals; daily physical activity; and projects that allow them to explore and learn.

Current Mental Health Impact – Youth Voice

- 38% of youth report that they felt difficulties were piling up so high that they could not overcome them sometimes or often in the past month
- 45.5% of high schoolers say that COVID has made their mental health worse
- 47% of high schoolers report that COVID has worsened school connections and 57% of 11th/12th graders say it hurt their educational experience
- 52% of 11th/12th graders say that they are lonelier due to COVID and 48% feel more anxious
- 41% of youth had nervousness in the last week and 35% had sleeping problems

Source: Data from Oct 2020 Planet Youth Survey; five VT communities (Richford, Enosburg, Swanton, Rutland, Fair Haven); 7-12 grades; 65% participation rate.