Improving the Mental Health of Young People in America

A 15-year-old who reaches for his mother’s prescription opioids one too many times.

A 19-year-old who dies by suicide because she’s tired of being lonely.

A 25-year-old who uses alcohol to escape depression.

These are our children, brothers and sisters, our friends and neighbors. And they are slipping through the health care cracks on a daily basis.

The Issue

More young Americans are struggling with mental health and addiction issues now than at any other point in history, yet they are the least likely to receive care. Left unaddressed, these issues will fast-track morbidity and early mortality, weaken communities and lead to intergenerational distress.

The Impact

Without sustainable solutions in place, the behavioral health issues of young people will continue to contribute to a host of compounding deficiencies, such as poor performance in school, minimizing higher-education opportunities; social isolation, exacerbating loneliness and suicide risk; and diminished job opportunities, leading to unemployment and homelessness.

The Opportunity

Building a healthier future for youth requires a multi-pronged approach. It involves giving communities tools for infrastructure growth; teaching schools and workplaces how to spot and address mental illness and addiction; reducing stigma and discrimination; enabling service providers to provide a full spectrum of care; and improving coordination between systems to remove unnecessary obstacles to treatment …

... this is where the National Council for Behavioral Health comes in.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

1 https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers
Since 1969, the National Council for Behavioral Health has been fighting to ensure that all Americans living with mental illnesses and addictions have access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery. With a network of 3,326 providers and a commanding voice on Capitol Hill, we can ensure that today’s generation — and those to follow — can heal and thrive. Through a five-year plan grounded in evidence-based interventions, we seek to:

- Empower millions of young people to recognize, talk about and seek care for mental health and addiction through Mental Health First Aid (MHFA), a training program with more than 2 million people trained and 18,000 instructors.\(^4\) By scaling MHFA, we can increase mental health literacy, build support systems, and reduce stigma and discrimination.

- Expand our Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) program, a nationally recognized model of care that significantly increases access to services and eliminates barriers to life-saving support.\(^5\) By bringing CCBHCs to scale, we will lead the charge for coordinated, comprehensive care for young people in need.

Our Ask

Now is the time to bring our proven solutions to every community. Your generous contribution will help those most in need receive the care they expect and deserve:

- **$1 million**: Help us provide scholarships to MHFA instructors to cover the costs of blended learning, training manuals and local expenses, removing a major inhibitor to program expansion.

- **$5 million**: Help us build out our CCBHCs and MHFA evaluations — and lead a national campaign promoting the programs as family and community resources — to improve adolescent wellbeing.

- **$10 million**: Help us engage in a nationwide advocacy and public affairs campaign to pursue state and federal legislative action in support of MHFA and CCBHCs.

For a full view of our five-year plan, please contact Mohini Venkatesh, Vice President of Business & Strategy, at MohiniV@TheNationalCouncil.org.