

Mental Health in Students throughout Nevada and the Country

May 18, 2022

Robert Barsel



My Background

- Robert Barsel, age 16
- Founder of Coping Kids (501c3 created to spread awareness about and promote children's mental health)
- Trained according to best practices as dictated by the National Association for Grieving Children to be a peer support group facilitator with four years of experience
- Adapted my own peer support curriculum and am currently writing & illustrating a Coping Skills workbook to disseminate on the Coping Kids website.



What is mental health?

- The way a young person's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors affect his or her life
- Mental health is a spectrum

What is mental illness?

- A condition that impacts a young person's thinking, emotions, and mood such that it interferes with his or her daily functioning at home and school.

<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions>

- Examples include:
 - ADHD
 - General Depressive Disorder
 - General Anxiety Disorder
 - Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
 - Eating disorders

U.S. Surgeon General's Call to Action

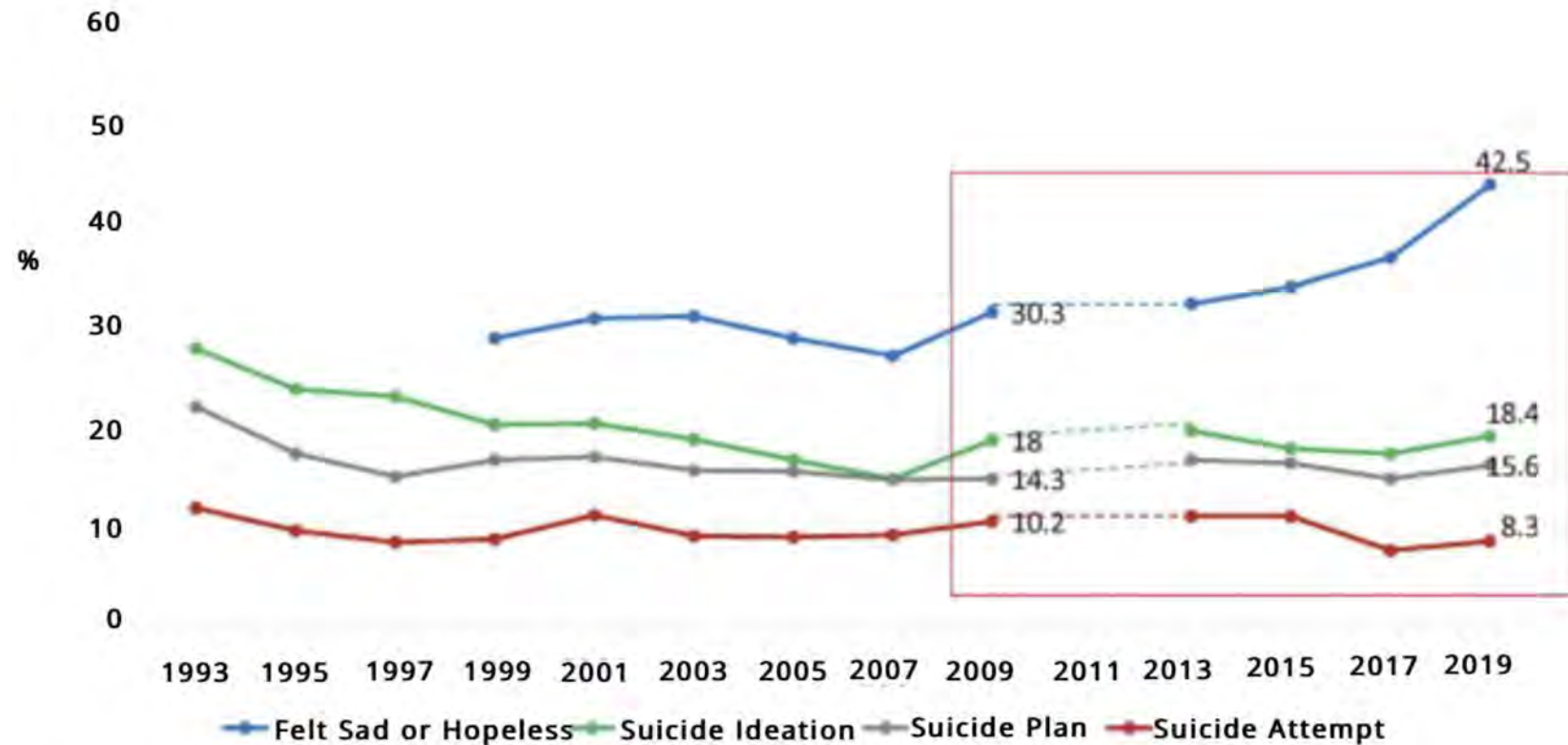
- U.S. Surgeon General issued a public health advisory in December 2021 on the mental health challenges confronting youth, a rare warning and call to action to address what he called an emerging crisis exacerbated by pandemic hardships and citing mounting evidence of ongoing harm.

<https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/surgeon-general-youth-mental-health-advisory.pdf>

Trends in Past 12 Month Mental Health Nevada High School Students

- Pre-pandemic feelings of sadness and hopelessness was already on the rise

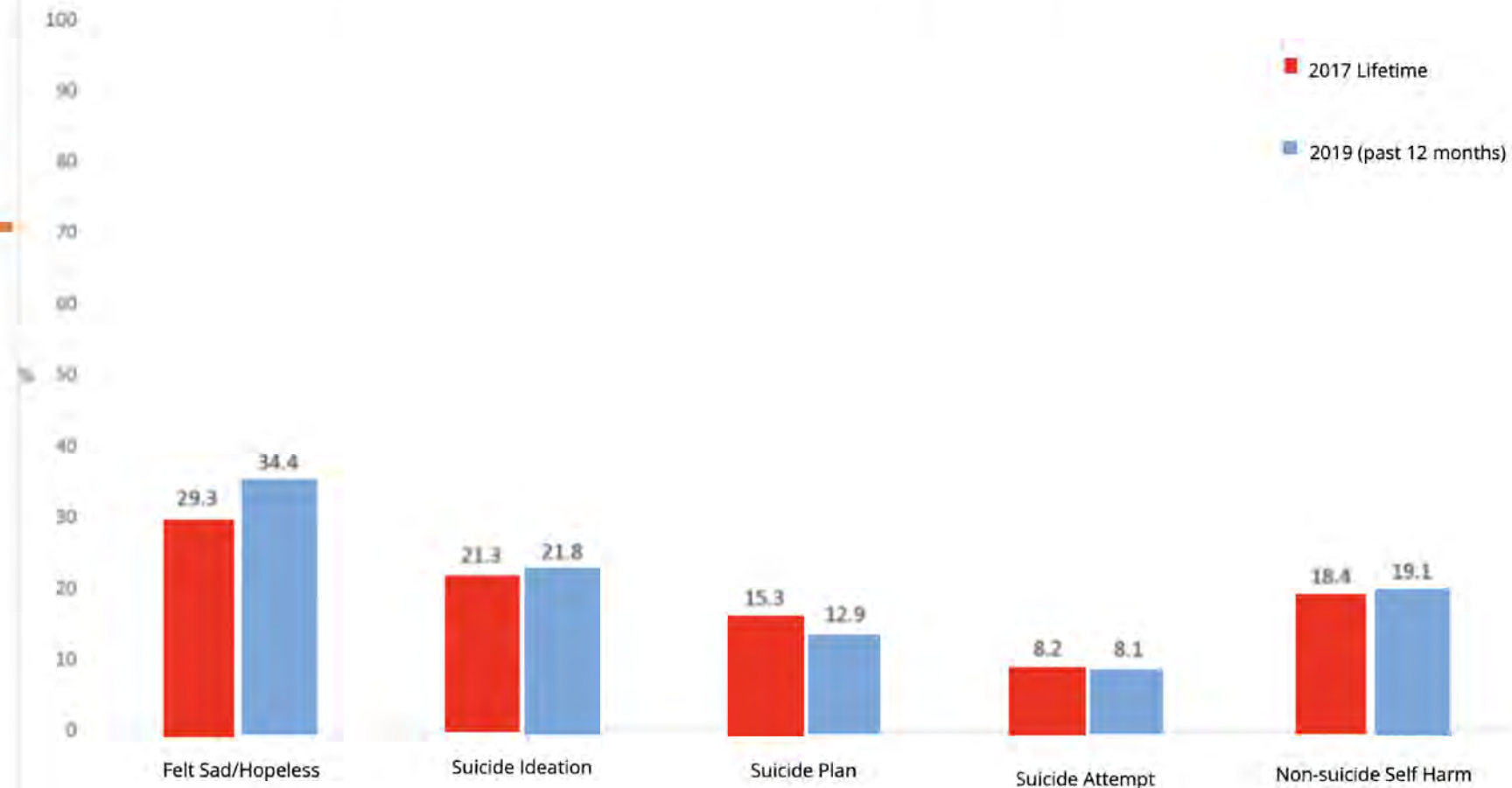
<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Document/27043>



Middle School 2017-2019 Comparison Mental Health Lifetime & Past 12 Months

- Middle schools have also been experiencing an increase in sadness and hopelessness, increasing by 5% from 2017-2019

<https://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/InterimCommittee/REL/Document/27043>



How does mental health impact young students?

Per SAMHSA...

Below are some of the ways that undertreated or untreated mental health concerns can impact young people at school

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty controlling attention during learning tasks• Trouble persevering during challenging academic tasks• Trouble recalling academic information• Slowed problem solving• Trouble completing homework• Reductions in standardized achievement test scores• Lower end-of-course grades | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent absences from school due to illness and school avoidance• Trouble making and/or maintaining friendships• Low energy for physical activities, including sports and other recreation• Difficulty following school routines and norms, resulting in suspension and expulsion |
|--|---|

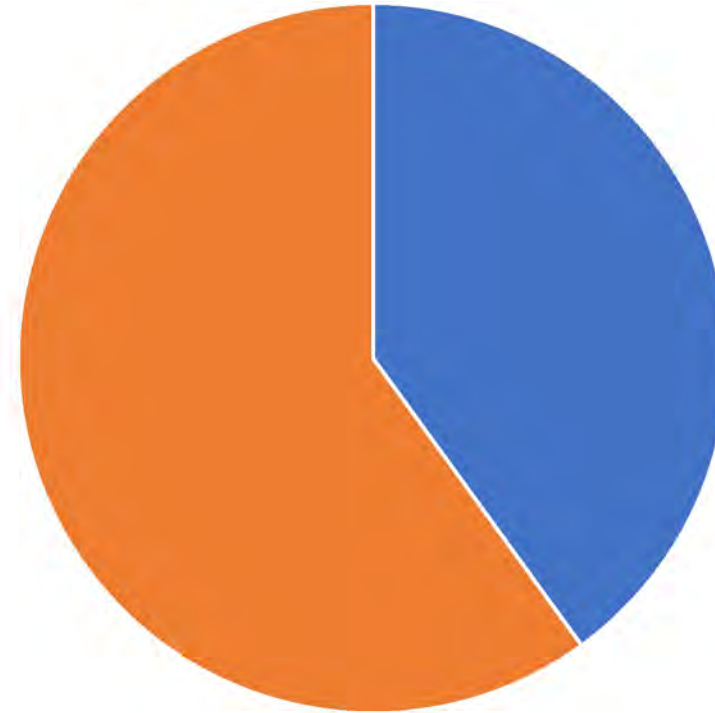
https://www.education.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt326/files/inline-documents/mental_health_and_academic_achievement.pdf

How does mental health affect the larger community?

- 64 percent of jail inmates, 54 percent of state prisoners and 45 percent of federal prisoners reporting mental health concerns.
<https://www.apa.org/monitor/2014/10/incarceration>
- 20 to 25% of the homeless population in the United States suffers from some form of severe mental illness. https://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/Mental_Illness.pdf

- Of Nevada's 539,000 K-12 students, 42,000 have had a major depressive episode and 28,000 of them did not receive ANY treatment (per Feb 2022 *America's School Mental Health Report Card* ranking Nevada 51st in Overall Rank for Youth Mental health in every year the survey was completed since 2015.

https://hopefulfutures.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Final_Master_021522.pdf



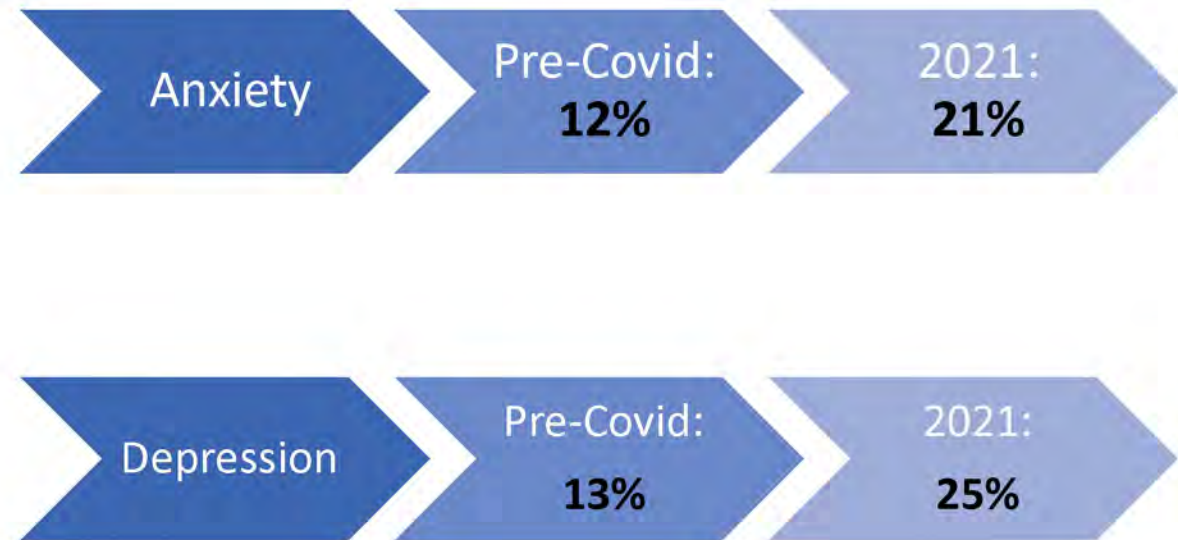
Kids who have received help



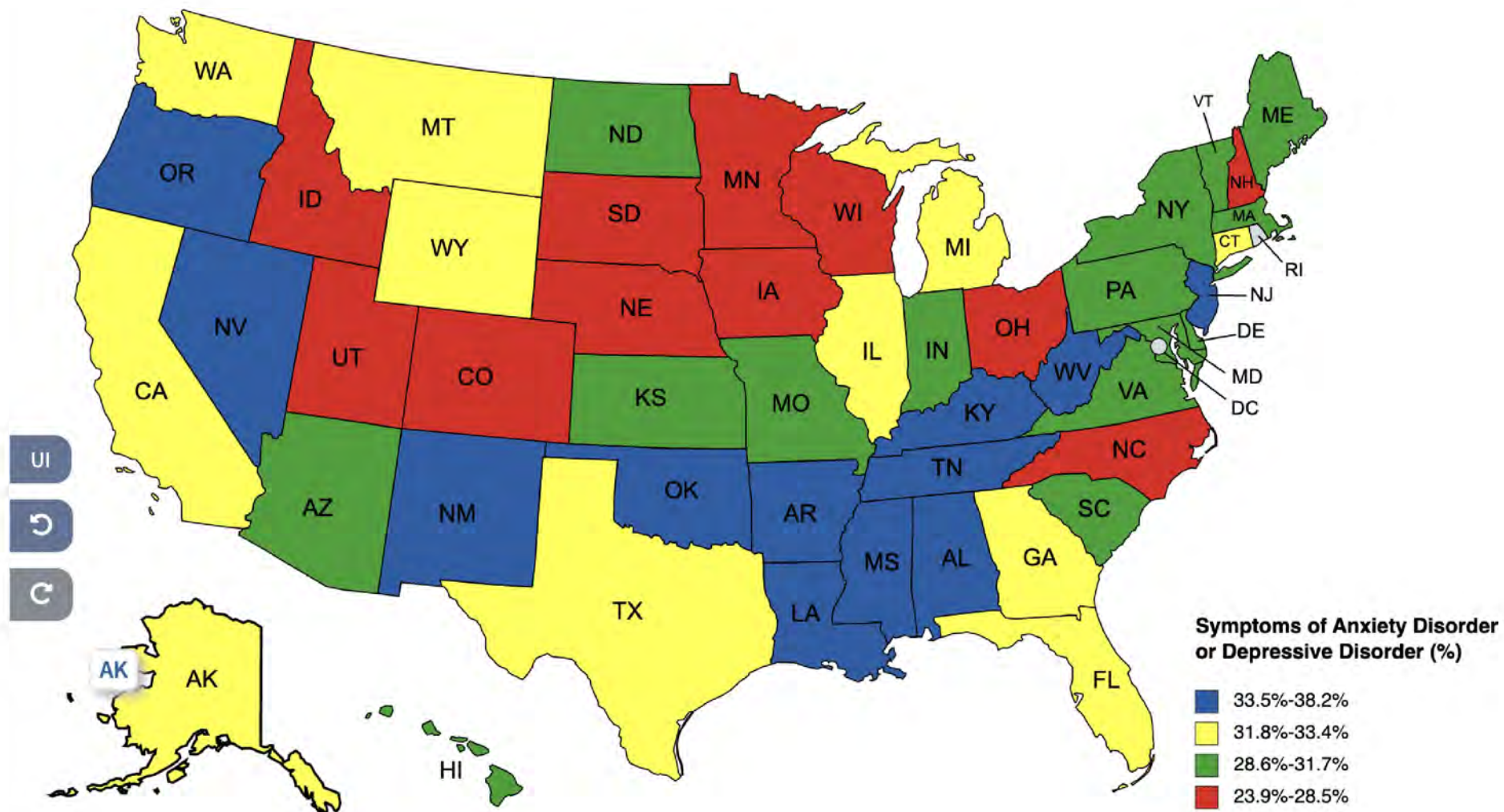
Kids who haven't received help

- Since the pandemic, prevalence of anxiety in children and adolescents increased by 9% and depression increased by 12%

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2782796>

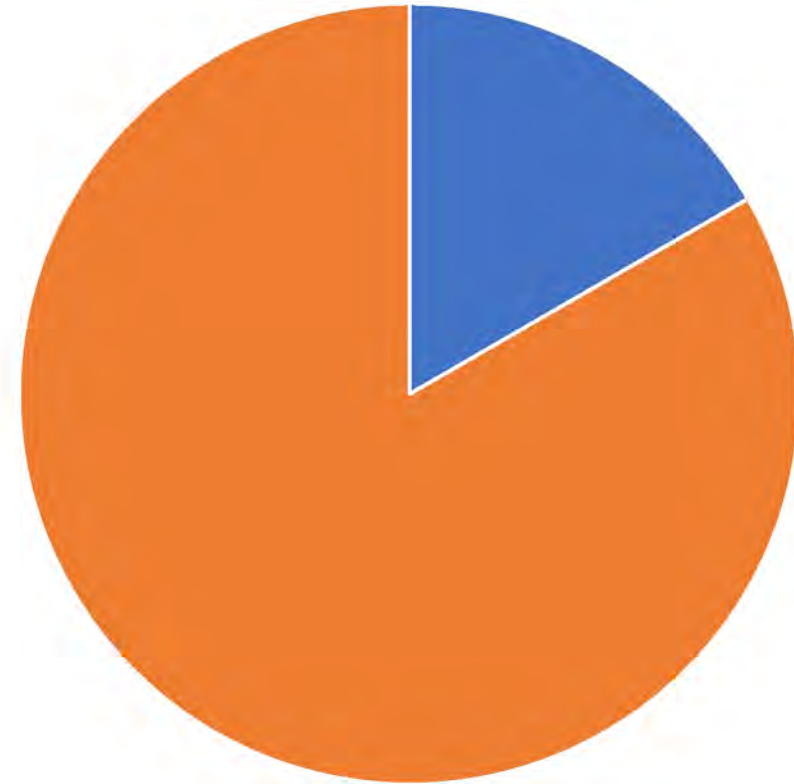


Per the *CDC Household Pulse Survey* from Jan 26– Feb 27, 2022 , Nevada ranks 4th in the nation with 37% of adults reporting symptoms of depressive disorder or anxiety disorder



- 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 5 youth ages 13-18 experience serious mental illness.
- Most prevalent in students are ADHD, GAD, GDD

Mental Illness in Children



■ Children who have experienced a serious mental illness

- Per the CDC, suicide is the **2nd** leading cause of death for ages 10-24. **90%** of those who commit suicide had an underlying mental illness.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/facts/disparities-in-suicide.html#age>

Rank	Ages 10-14	Ages 15-24	Ages 25-34
1	Unintentional Injury 778	Unintentional Injury 11,755	Unintentional Injury 24,516
2	Suicide 534	Suicide 5,954	Suicide 8,059
3	Malignant Neoplasms 404	Homicide 4,774	Homicide 5,341
4	Homicide 191	Malignant Neoplasms 1,388	Malignant Neoplasms 3,577

-
- There are simply not enough mental health professionals to address the problem in Nevada
<https://hopefulfutures.us/action-nevada/>

Provider Type	Nevada Ratio	Recommended Ratio	Need
School Psychologist	1 : 1,866	1 : 500	3.7 times as many
School Social Worker	1 : 8,730	1 : 250	35 times as many
School Counselor	1 : 544	1 : 250	Twice as many

- Right now, Nevada's language for mental health education is incredibly lacking

[https://doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/Nevada Academic Standards/Health and PE/2020NVACSHHealth.pdf](https://doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/nde.doe.nv.gov/content/Nevada_Academic_Standards/Health_and_PE/2020NVACSHHealth.pdf)

Grade K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Middle School	High School
1.ME.K.1 Identify different emotions.	1.ME.1.1 Recognize the relationship between emotions and actions.	1.ME.2.1 Describe how the body responds to emotions physically and behaviorally.	1.ME.3.1 Define stress, eustress, and distress.	1.ME.4.1 Identify physical and psychological responses to stressors.	1.ME.5.1 Compare the causes, symptoms, and effects among stress, anxiety, sadness, and depression.	1.ME.MS.1 Connect the relationship between mental health and physical health.	1.ME.HS.1 Investigate the relationship between mental health and physical health.
1.ME.K.2 List ways a person shows emotions.	1.ME.1.2 Demonstrate how to express emotions in healthy ways.	1.ME.2.2 Describe how the expression of emotions can influence actions.	1.ME.3.2 Identify how a person expresses stress.	1.ME.4.2 Recognize how expression of emotions can vary across individuals and situations.	1.ME.5.2 Relate how the expression of emotions can be triggered by a crisis or a trauma situation.	1.ME.MS.2 Identify how loss, grief, trauma, and emotional distress may influence self-injurious or suicidal behaviors.	1.ME.HS.2 Analyze ways to decrease the risk of self-injurious or suicidal behaviors.




Is there a legislative solution?

- My proposed legislation would include:
 - Defining signs and symptoms of common mental health challenges.
 - Promoting mental health wellness and protective factors.
 - Teaching healthy coping skills and recognizing unhealthy ones.
 - Destigmatizing mental health issues.

Why schools?

- The earlier mental health concerns are detected and addressed, the more likely the young person is to avoid the onset and/or progression of a mental illness. ¹
- Children spend more hours at school than at home, thereby making schools the most efficient and effective setting for mental health education.
- Proactive vs. Reactive approach to mental health issues.
- Empowers students for life.

<https://psycnet.apa.org/doiLanding?doi=10.1037%2Fa0019652>



How can improving mental health benefit everyone?

- Promoting mental health and wellness leads to:
 - Higher overall productivity
 - Better educational outcomes
 - Lower crime rates
 - Lower health care costs
 - Improved family life
 - Improved quality of life
 - Increased lifespan

How States Address Teacher Curriculum

- New York has invested \$1.5 million since 2016 into developing a website offering curriculum options for their various school districts
<https://www.mentalhealthdnys.org/education-professional/mental-health-education-in-schools/>
 - We could offer funds to utilize their website; many resources are available for free (ex. recommended books for introducing mental health as a subject matter for English)
- California has a robust curriculum <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/healthstandmar08.pdf>
- While it is early in the process, I firmly believe that this would have a far-reaching economic impact on the state by decreasing homelessness, incarceration and substance abuse problems.

Robert Barsel

Contact information:

(702) 985-6646

Rbarsel01@gmail.com