



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food
and Agriculture

4-H National
Headquarters

Vulnerable Population: Mental Health and Well-being

The purpose of this document is to provide background information on Youth Mental Health and Well-being.

Defining Mental Health and Well-being

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps to determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

Biological factors, life experiences, and environments all contribute to mental health problems.¹

Mental well-being is essential to overall health as it allows people to realize their full potential, cope with the stresses of life, work productively, and make meaningful contributions to their communities.²

Fast Facts on Youth Mental Health and Well-being

One in every four to five youth live with a disabling mental disorder.³

Youth with mental health disorders may face **challenges** in their homes, school, community, and relationships. However, these disorders are often not permanent and youth can find support from friends, family and mental health professionals.⁴

Signs that indicate mental health problems include changes in diet or sleep, low energy, sudden irritability, severe mood swings, distancing from people, numbness, hopelessness and inability to perform daily tasks.⁵

Suicide is one the top three leading causes of death in youth from ages 15-19. 90% of youth that commit suicide have a mental health condition.⁶

Federal Laws Regarding Youth and Mental Health

[Student Support Act](#)

[Caring Start Act of 2017](#)

References

¹ [What is Mental Health?](#)

² [Mental and Emotional Well-being](#)

³ [Mental Disorder Prevalence](#)

⁴ [Mental Health](#)

⁵ [What is Mental Health- Warning Signs](#)

⁶ [Adolescent Health](#)