

# May is Mental Health Awareness Month

Trying to tell the difference between what expected behaviors are and what might be the signs of a mental illness isn't always easy. There's no easy test that can let someone know if there is mental illness or if actions and thoughts might be typical behaviors of a person or the result of a physical illness.



Each illness has its own symptoms, but common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Feeling excessively sad or low
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes, including uncontrollable “highs” or feelings of euphoria
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- Changes in sex drive
- Difficulty perceiving reality (delusions or hallucinations, in which a person experiences and senses things that don't exist in objective reality)
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality (“lack of insight” or anosognosia)
- Overuse of substances like alcohol or drugs
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing “aches and pains”)
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance

Mental health conditions can also begin to develop in young children. Because they're still learning how to identify and talk about thoughts and emotions, their most obvious symptoms are behavioral. Symptoms in children may include the following:

- Changes in school performance
- Excessive worry or anxiety, for instance fighting to avoid bed or school
- Hyperactive behavior
- Frequent nightmares
- Frequent disobedience or aggression
- Frequent temper tantrums



**1 in 5 U.S. adults** experience mental illness each year.



**1,112,000 adults** in New Jersey have a mental health condition.



That's more than **3X** the population of Newark.

It is more important than ever to build a stronger mental health system that provides the care, support and services needed to help people build better lives.



**More than half of Americans** report that **COVID-19** has had a **negative impact** on their mental health.

In February 2021, **42.2% of adults in New Jersey** reported symptoms of **anxiety or depression**.

**19.9% were unable to get needed counseling or therapy.**



**1 in 20 U.S. adults** experience serious mental illness each year.

In New Jersey, **248,000 adults** have a **serious mental illness**.



**1 in 6 U.S. youth** aged 6–17 experience a **mental health disorder** each year.

**72,000 New Jerseyans** age 12–17 have depression.

## New Jerseyans struggle to get the help they need.



**More than half of people** with a mental health condition in the U.S. **did not receive any treatment** in the last year.

Of the **309,000 adults in New Jersey** who **did not receive needed mental health care**, **28.5%** did not because of cost.

**7.9% of people in the state are uninsured.**



**New Jerseyans** are over **9x more likely to be forced out-of-network** for mental health care than for primary health care — making it more difficult to find care and less affordable due to higher out-of-pocket costs.

**39,712 people** in New Jersey live in a community that **does not have enough mental health professionals**.

## An inadequate mental health system affects individuals, families and communities.



**High school students** with depression are more than **2x more likely to drop out** than their peers.

**61.4% of New Jerseyans** age 12–17 who have depression **did not receive any care** in the last year.



9,662 people in New Jersey are homeless and **1 in 3 live with a serious mental illness.**



On average, 1 person in the U.S. **dies by suicide every 11 minutes.**

In New Jersey, **778 lives were lost to suicide** and 239,000 adults had thoughts of suicide in the last year.

**1 in 4 people with a serious mental illness has been arrested**

by the police at some point in their lifetime –



leading to over **2 million jail bookings** of people with serious mental illness each year.

About **2 in 5 adults** in jail or prison have a history of mental illness.



**7 in 10 youth** in the juvenile justice system have a mental health condition.



National Alliance on Mental Illness

NAMI New Jersey is part of NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

*This fact sheet was compiled based on data available in February 2021. For full citations, visit: [nami.org/mhpolicystats](https://nami.org/mhpolicystats).*