As young people face myriad challenges, we explore how youth philanthropy can best engage young people of all socioeconomic backgrounds in grantmaking.

**Youth and Mental Health Challenges**

1 in 4 children and teens experience mental illness

In 2020, 1 in 6 young people ages 12-17 had a major depressive episode

In 2020, 1 in 5 young people had declining mental health due to COVID-19

17M Children Face Mental Health Challenges

- Children tend to suffer more harm from disruption and family stress than adults
- Children who experience food and financial insecurity, in addition to social isolation, reported the poorest mental health outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the share of students who say there is an adult at school with whom they can discuss anxiety, stress, or depression, dropped from 46% before the pandemic to 39% in 2021

In Spring 2021, 49% of students reported feeling depressed, anxious, or stressed, which made it hard to do their best in school.

Insufficient Funding

In 2020, total US giving increased slightly from 2019

Charitable Giving to Health Decreased by 4.2%

But giving to healthcare organizations declined by over 4%.

- Only 5% of foundation healthcare grants go to mental health
- Less than 1% of US government spending goes to mental health

To engage young people in youth philanthropy programs, we must be aware of and ready to assist young people as they face mental health challenges. Robust support systems and mentors are vital to young people’s participation in these programs. Programs should also consider funding youth mental health organizations in order to create a holistic approach to positive youth mental health outcomes.

Please visit http://sillermancenter.brandeis.edu for more information. See sources on the back.
Youth and Mental Health Challenges — References


- NAMI. (2020). 2020 Mental Health by the Numbers: Youth and Young Adults.

