

A photograph of four young people sitting on a stone wall with arched openings, looking out at the ocean during sunset. The people are seen from behind, and the ocean is calm with a few rocks visible. The sky is a mix of orange and blue.

# MENTAL HEALTH AND OUR YOUTH

Dale Wisely

# Youth Mental Health: The Crisis

- Getting worse: 10% of youth have major depression
- 1 in 6 kids has MH diagnosis
- BEFORE COVID! And youth getting worst of MH effects
- No more than half get treatment
- Even fewer by MH professionals



A dark, moody photograph of three people in a boat, possibly on water, with a textured, painterly style. The image is dark and serves as a background for the text.

ADHD

Anxiety/Depression

Suicide & Self-Harm

Post-traumatic reactions

Substance abuse

# MAJOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG YOUTH

# Emotional needs

Sense of belonging

Certainty they are loved

Sense of being *able*

Social interaction/play with peers

Safety & security (freedom from abuse)

Guidance & limits



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# MAJOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG YOUTH

Associated with wide  
variety of problems when  
untreated or undertreated

ADHD

- ▶ School underachievement/failure
- ▶ Depression, self-harm, suicide
- ▶ Poor relationships, including marriages (divorces)
- ▶ Substance abuse
- ▶ Job problems

ADULT / ADOLESCENT COMPLICATIONS OF  
UNTREATED / UNDER TREATED ADHD



- ▶ Financial problems (Lower SES, underemployment & financial mismanagement)
- ▶ Incarcerations
- ▶ Unplanned pregnancies
- ▶ Multitude of health problems
- ▶ *Injury (driving, head injury)*

ADULT / ADOLESCENT COMPLICATIONS OF  
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# MAJOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG YOUTH



FEBRUARY 20, 2019



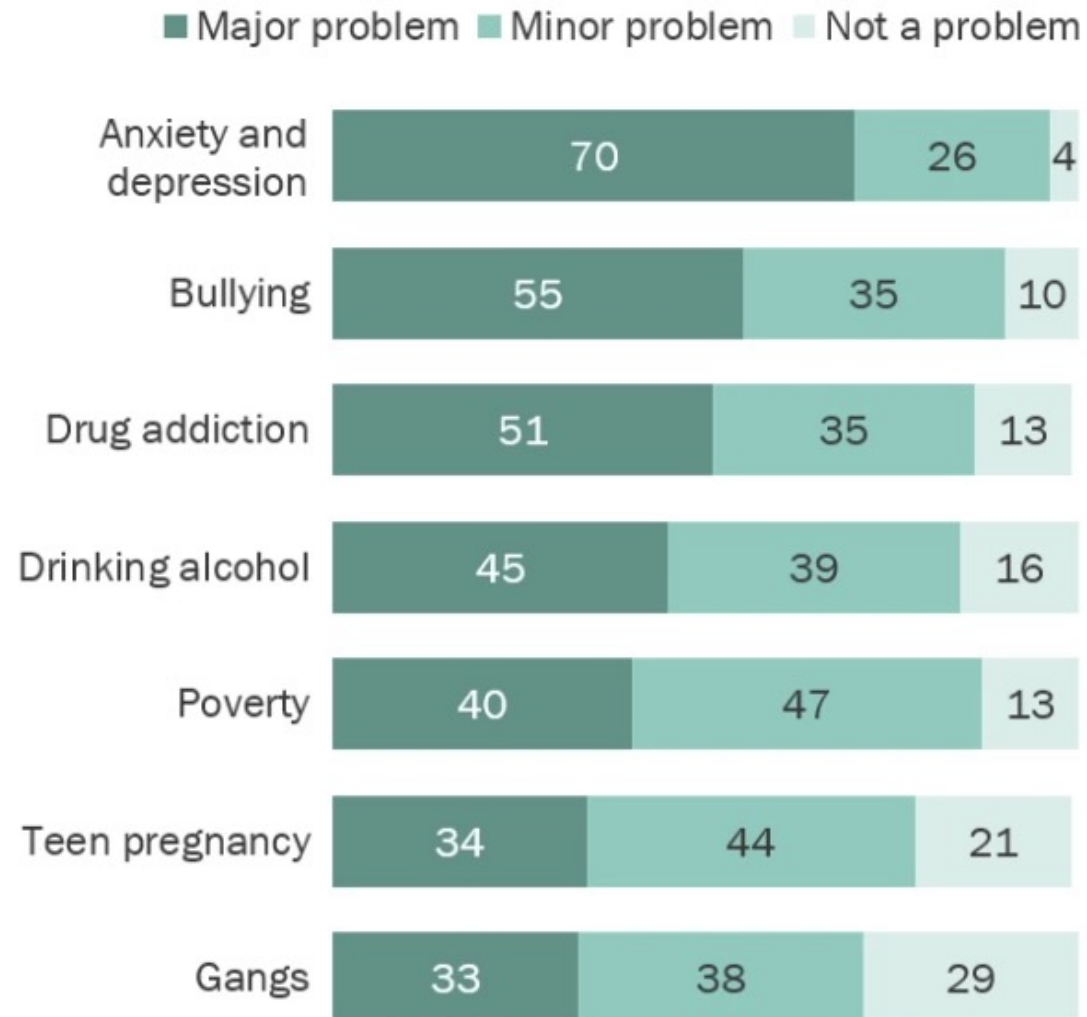
# Most U.S. Teens See Anxiety and Depression as a Major Problem Among Their Peers

*For boys and girls, day-to-day experiences and future aspirations vary in key ways*



## Anxiety and depression top list of problems teens see among their peers

*% of teens saying each of the following is a \_\_\_\_ among people their age in the community where they live*



- ▶ Sadness or hopelessness
- ▶ Irritability, anger, or hostility
- ▶ Tearfulness / frequent crying
- ▶ Withdrawal from friends & family
- ▶ Loss of interest in activities
- ▶ Poor school performance
- ▶ Changes in eating & sleeping habits
- ▶ Restlessness & agitation
- ▶ Feelings of worthlessness & guilt
- ▶ Lack of enthusiasm & motivation
- ▶ Fatigue or lack of energy
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating
- ▶ Unexplained aches & pains (headaches/stomach aches)
- ▶ Thoughts of death or suicide

## SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION IN YOUTH





Problems at school

Running away

Drug & alcohol abuse

Low self-esteem

Smartphone/ social media /  
gaming problems



- ▶ Feeling nervous or "on edge."
- ▶ Perfectionism with distress
- ▶ Unfounded or unrealistic fears.
- ▶ Trouble separating from parents.
- ▶ Sleep disturbance.
- ▶ Obsessive thoughts and/or compulsive behaviors.
- ▶ Trembling, sweating, shortness of breath, **stomachaches, headaches,** and/or muscle tension or other physical symptoms.

## SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY IN YOUTH

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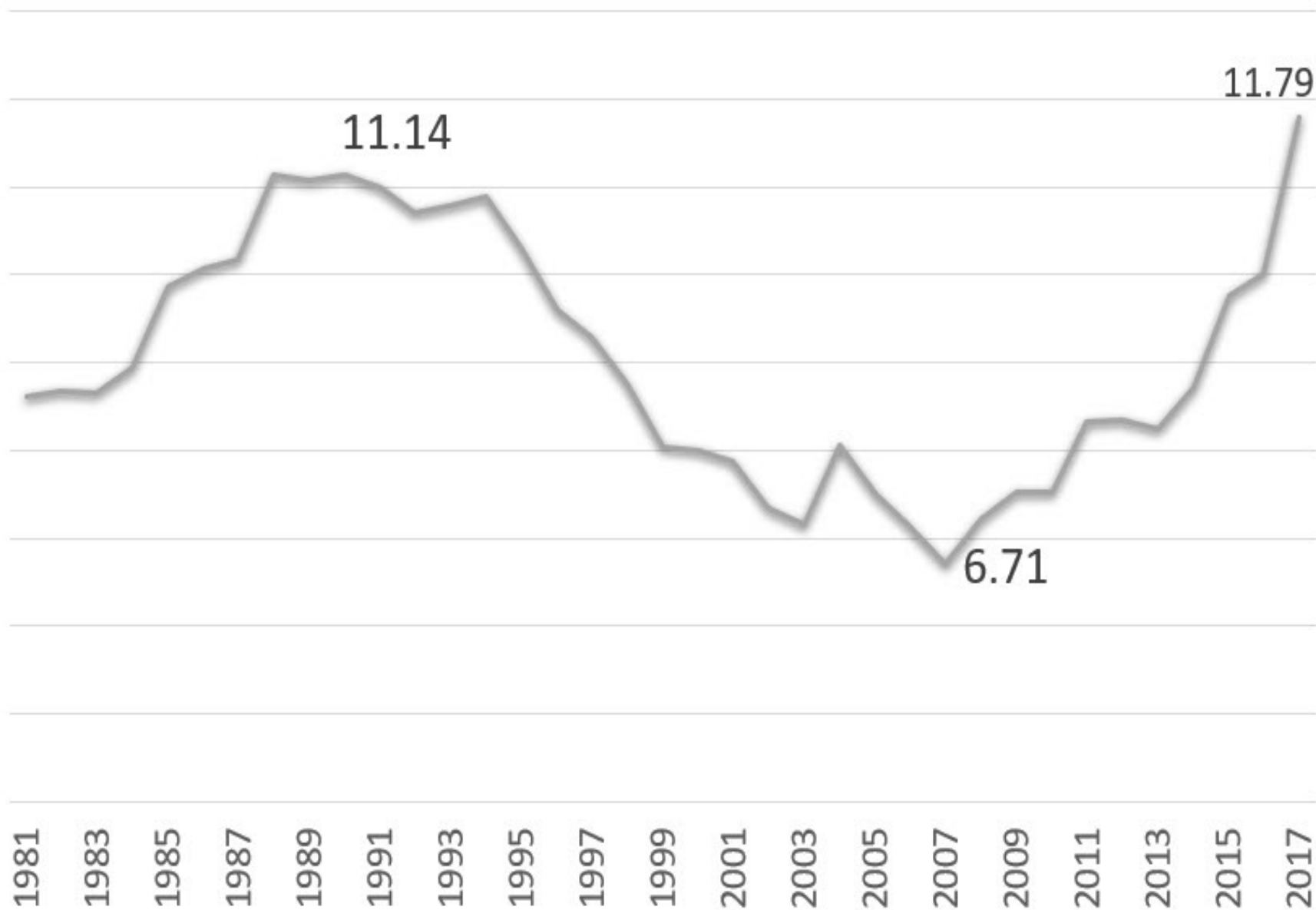
Substance abuse

# MAJOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG YOUTH

suicide

a national crisis





Suicide Rates, 15 to 19-year-olds, 1981-2017.

Peaked in early 1990s; Dropped to low point in 2008.

In 10 years, 2007-2017, suicide rates in teenagers

increased **76%**

Up **30%** in all Americans

Up **22%** in boys and men

Up **35%** in girls and women

Up **82%** women age 15-19

Up **150%** in girls age 10-14,  
but still rare.



# Major contributors to youth suicide

Clinical Depression

Severe Anxiety

Substance Abuse/Addiction

Eating Disorders

Alienation from Family, School, Friends  
(a lack of *belonging*)

Bullying (as a trigger)

# What to do?

Accept that no person  
is immune to mental  
illness.

# What to do?

PROACTIVELY ask child/teen directly about suicide.

- Begin as early as age 9 if aware of emotional distress
- routinely for teenagers.



# The Columbia Lighthouse Project

	Past 1 Month	
1) Have you wished you were dead or wished you could go to sleep and not wake up?		
2) Have you actually had any thoughts about killing yourself?		
If YES to 2, answer questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 If NO to 2, go directly to question 6		
3) Have you thought about how you might do this?		
4) Have you had any intention of acting on these thoughts of killing yourself, as opposed to you have the thoughts but you definitely would not act on them?	High Risk	
5) Have you started to work out or worked out the details of how to kill yourself? Did you intend to carry out this plan?	High Risk	
Always Ask Question 6	Life-time	Past 3 Months
6) Have you done anything, started to do anything, or prepared to do anything to end your life? <i>Examples: Collected pills, obtained a gun, gave away valuables, wrote a will or suicide note, held a gun but changed your mind, cut yourself, tried to hang yourself, etc.</i>		High Risk

# What to do?

If your child needs  
mental health care, call  
doctor...  
...and good luck.

# What to do?

If a child has a mental health issue (*including ADHD*), they should see a mental health professional regularly, if not frequently, even if they are doing well.



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# MAJOR MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS AMONG YOUTH

# LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH, AGE 15-19

- Motor vehicle crashes
- Suicide
- Homicide
- Drowning
- Unintentional overdose