



Mental Health Resources

About Mental Health

Millions of people in the U.S. are affected by mental illness each year.

- **1 in 5** U.S. adults experience mental illness each year
- **1 in 20** U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year
- **1 in 6** U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health disorder each year
- **50%** of all lifetime mental illness begins by age 14, and 75% by age 24
- Suicide is the **second leading cause** of death among people aged 10-14

A mental health condition is not the result of one event. Research suggests multiple, linking causes. Genetics, environment and lifestyle influence whether someone develops a mental health condition. A stressful job or home life makes some people more susceptible, as do traumatic life events. Biochemical processes, circuits and basic brain structure may play a role, too.

None of this means that the person is broken or that anyone did anything “wrong.” Mental illness is no one’s fault. For many people, recovery — including meaningful roles in social life, school and work — is possible, especially when treatment begins early and the person plays a strong role in their own recovery process.

--[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)

Intersectionality with Brain Injury

Brain injury can create mental health problems in children, youth and adults and it can worsen pre-existing issues, even with a concussion level injury (mild). A mild injury does not necessarily mean a mild outcome. **As high as 75% of the people looking for mental health and substance use treatment also have a brain injury.** Six months to one year following a brain injury, one third will experience a mental health problem and that number will grow over time. “People with brain injury of any severity have 2 to 4 times the risk of attempting or having a death by suicide.”¹

Common mental health issues following brain injury in childhood include “depression, anxiety, personality changes, psychosis/paranoia, secondary attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder and mania/hypomania.”¹ Adults with brain injury are more likely than those without an injury to experience “mood disorders, anxiety disorders, psychotic disorders and substance abuse disorders,”¹ as well as personality changes, decreased self-awareness, suicidality and socially inappropriate behavior.

People with brain injuries often have **cognitive and physical changes** in addition to the mental health changes listed above. Cognitive changes can include decreased attention, memory, self-awareness (including awareness of changes and their impact), judgment, decision-making and reasoning, as well as increased impulsivity. They can have difficulty picking up on social cues and may act inappropriately. **Sometimes symptoms are unseen and therefore untreated. Sometimes symptoms are seen but misattributed to other things, like lack of interest in treatment or purposeful non-adherence.**

People seeking mental health treatment **should be screened for a lifetime history of brain injury and provided with accommodations** that fit their symptoms. Voluntary cognitive screening may also be offered.¹

1. [ACL’s Behavioral Health Guide: Considerations for Best Practices for Children, Youth, and Adults with TBI](#) contains, among other useful information, evidence-based MH treatments for people with brain injury.



The Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (TDMHSAS)

TDMHSAS, through its four (4) Regional Mental Health Institutes and contracted relationships with more than 300 providers across the state, delivers a full array of prevention, early intervention, treatment and recovery services for Tennesseans living with or at risk of developing mental illness or substance use issues. In all, our programs reach about 750,000 Tennesseans a year with our largest direct treatment services provided to uninsured Tennesseans through our [Behavioral Health Safety Net](#) and substance use [Continuum of Care](#).

TDMHSAS contracts for 24/7/365 [statewide mobile crisis services](#) for adult and children and youth in all 95 counties of Tennessee. The department provides **emergency inpatient psychiatric services** to about 8,000 people a year through our [Regional Mental Health Institutes](#) located in Nashville, Memphis, Chattanooga, and Bolivar. TDMHSAS also serves as the licensing authority for all behavioral health providers with more than 1,850 licensed sites statewide. [Our licensure database search is available at this link](#).

The department has a highly successful program to **certify peers to use their lived experience of mental health and/or substance use challenges to help others**. There are currently more than 1,000 [Certified Peer Recovery Specialists](#) who are active in their certification and are helping others. The success of this program has produced certifications for young adults and for family members.

Additionally, TDMHSAS funds **nine Crisis Walk-In Centers (WIC) and Crisis Stabilization Units (CSU)** for adults (18+), along with one CSU for youth (4-17), offering a total of 134 beds for adults and 12 for youth across the state. In 2025 and 2026, three additional WIC/CSU sites for adults and two additional CSUs for youth will open for services. All WIC/CSU sites provide comprehensive short-term stabilization services for acute mental health crises and ensure Tennesseans get immediate, high-quality care, reducing the need for lengthy hospital stays and expensive emergency room visits. All WIC/CSU sites in Tennessee provide services 24/7/365. More information about WIC/CSU sites in Tennessee can be found here [Crisis Walk-In Centers](#).

TDMHSAS contracts with **eight (8) 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline providers** in Tennessee ensuring that calls/texts/chats in all 95 counties in Tennessee are answered around the clock, every day of the year.

To learn more about TDMHSAS services: [TN.gov/behavioral-health](https://tn.gov/behavioral-health)

Tennessee Department of Health Suicide Prevention Program

The **Tennessee Department of Health (TDH) Suicide Prevention Program** is a statewide initiative dedicated to identifying and supporting individuals at risk for suicide. The program places particular emphasis on reducing suicide risk among rural populations, with a focus on men and individuals aged 15–64 living in these communities. Established in **January 2019** and supported by federal funding, the program collaborates with statewide partners to build a **comprehensive, coordinated system of suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention** across the state.

The program's mission is to **enhance, support, and strengthen Tennessee's suicide prevention infrastructure** using data-driven strategies. These include **community-based, healthcare-**

integrated, and **upstream interventions** designed to reduce suicide morbidity and mortality, especially among underserved populations.

Key Program Components

The TDH Suicide Prevention Program uses a **layered, multi-faceted approach** to address suicide risk and improve outcomes across Tennessee:

- **Training and Empowering Gatekeepers**
Educates community members and professionals to recognize suicide warning signs and respond appropriately.
- **Implementing Safer Healthcare Systems (Zero Suicide Framework)**
Promotes organization-wide improvements in healthcare systems to identify, engage and treat individuals at risk for suicide.
- **Expanding Telemental Health Best Practices**
Training providers to improve delivery of telemental health services, particularly in rural and underserved communities.
- **Launching Public Awareness Campaigns**
Reduces stigma and promotes help-seeking behavior through targeted outreach and education efforts.
- **Leveraging Real-Time Data (ESSENCE Alert System)**
Utilizes the **Electronic Surveillance System for the Early Notification of Community-Based Epidemics (ESSENCE)** to monitor spikes in suicide-related emergency department visits and initiates a timely, coordinated response when necessary.
- **Analyzing and Sharing Suicide-related Data**
Providing timely, insightful information to inform suicide prevention initiatives.
- **Empowering Youth through Proactive Mental Health Programming**
Implementing Sources of Strength (SOS), an evidence-based, youth-led suicide prevention model, in schools, faith-based organizations (FBOs), and community-based organizations (CBOs) across rural communities.

Resources and Opportunities

[PreventSuicideTN.com](https://www.preventsuicideTN.com) – Central hub for suicide prevention information and services

[Learn About the ESSENCE Alert System](#)

[Find a Suicide Prevention Training](#)

[Understand Risk Factors and Warning Signs](#)

[Join the Suicide Prevention Advisory Group](#)

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline 30 second video “Athletic and Performance Pressure”](#)

TennCare

TennCare is Tennessee's managed care Medicaid program, which provides health insurance coverage to certain groups of low-income individuals such as pregnant women, children, parents or caretaker relatives of minor children, older adults, and adults with disabilities.

To learn more about applying for **TennCare**: [TennCare \(tn.gov\)](https://tenncare.tn.gov)

Learn more about **behavioral health services provided by TennCare contracted managed care organizations**:

Wellpoint [Tennessee Medicaid | Wellpoint](#)

BlueCare [BlueCare Tennessee \(bcbst.com\)](https://bluecare.tennessee.gov)

United HealthCare [Tennessee UnitedHealthcare Community Plan | UnitedHealthcare Community Plan: Medicare & Medicaid Health Plans \(uhccommunityplan.com\)](#)

[Tennessee START Assessment & Stabilization Teams](#) (TN START AST) are a statewide resource for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities who have complex behavioral or mental health needs. TN START AST is a collaboration between the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD) and the Center for START Services. START (Systematic, Therapeutic, Assessment, Resources & Treatment) is a comprehensive model of service supports that optimizes independence, treatment, and community living for individuals with IDD and behavioral health needs.

TN START AST provides prevention and stabilization through crisis response, stabilization planning, training and education, consultation, and formalized partnerships. TN START AST is available in all counties statewide and consists of five teams, divided into five multiple-county regions across Tennessee (Memphis, Jackson, Chattanooga, Nashville, and Knoxville). Each region consists of a team of Assessment & Stabilization Facilitators (ASF) and a supervising Assessment & Stabilization Manager (ASM). All team members will utilize evidence-based practices and be trained and certified by the Center for START Services.

Screening Tools

[Mental Health Screening Tools](#): depression, anxiety, alcohol and substance use, bipolar, youth mental health, youth mental health (for parents), PTSD, psychosis.

[Mental Health America](#) has additional screening tools in the areas of Postpartum Depression, Schizophrenia, Eating Disorders, ADHD, Addiction and Self-Injury.

[Columbia Suicide Severity Scale](#)

Crisis Intervention Tools

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline or you can text to 988; 988lifeline.org to chat with someone

Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988, then Press 1; or text 838255

[Blog: How to Help Someone in Crisis](#)

[Warning Signs & Symptoms](#)

Websites

[Guideline for Emergency Responses to People with Behavioral Health or Other Disabilities](#)

[NAMI Kids, Teen & Young Adults](#) – resources and support specifically for teens

[Recovery Within Reach](#) – housing options for people with Mental Health challenges

Infographics

[Behavioral Health Safety Net for Adults](#)

[Behavioral Health Safety Net for Children](#)

[Infographics and Factsheets from NAMI](#)

[Crisis Intervention Training for Law Enforcement and First Responders](#)

Trainings

[TN Mental Health Consumers Association](#)

[Suicide Prevention Trainings – TN Department of Health](#)

Support Groups

[NAMI Support-Groups](#)

[TN TBI Support Groups](#) - for more information regarding virtual and in-person support groups call the TBI Hotline at 1-800-882-0611.

TN Brighter Futures groups that are a part of this System of Care

TN Dept. of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services

National Alliance on Mental Illness – TN

TN Assoc. of Mental Health Organizations

TN Mental Health Consumers Association

TN Dept. of Health Suicide Prevention Program

Mental Health America of the MidSouth

TN Voices

TN Co-Occurring Disorders Collaborative

Suicide Prevention Network

TN Mental Health Assoc. of East TN



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