



BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL

John Bowden & Robert Carothers-Ruiz



TOPIC

12th grade team- How can we improve mental health education and awareness in our community?

TOPIC DESCRIPTION

Mental health is a prominent issue in our community with many teens experiencing depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts. A big cause of this issue is a lack of education and awareness about mental health. This issues mainly affects students in Middle and High school especially female students, but overall the whole community is impacted.

RESULT

Students are not feeling heard, seen, or understood.



**MORE THAN
53% YOUTH ARE
STRUGGLING
WITH MENTAL
HEALTH**

SIGNIFICANCE

This result is important because a large number of students in Alexandria are dealing with serious mental health issues like depression and suicidal thoughts. When 1 in 3 female students and 1 in 5 male students are struggling, that directly affects students' ability to focus in school, build relationships, and stay motivated. It also impacts overall safety and well-being in schools.



66% of females in our community are dealing with mental health trouble.

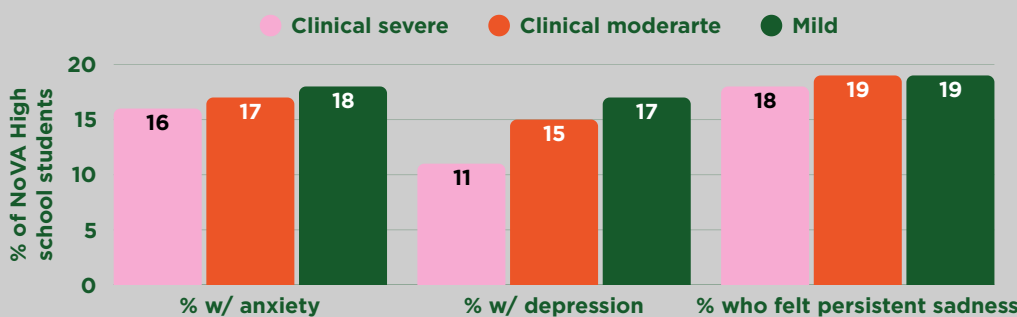
CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

- Expanding awareness and access to mental health services (Counselors, Teen Wellness Center, Hazel Health)
- Encourage more engagement from Student Support and leaders
- Mental health program coordinators
- School Deans/Principals,
- Teachers and students to buy in,
- Counselors

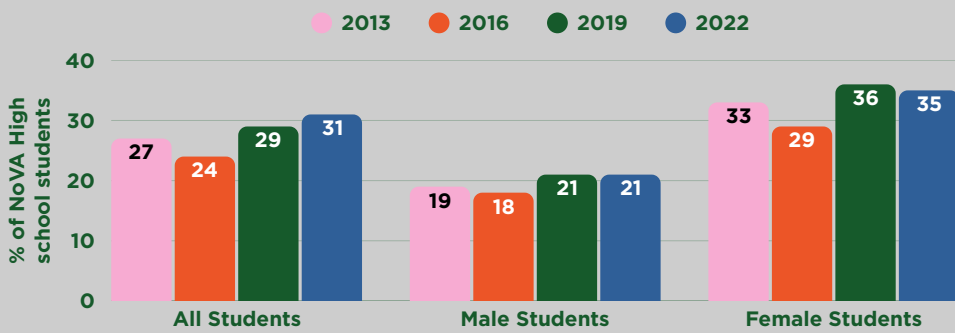
HOW ARE WE DOING?

Currently ACPS and the city of Alexandria isn't ignoring our issue, but we as a community feel there can be more done to address the issue. There are multiple options for students to get help for example in schools we have the teen wellness center, counselors, college and career center and other resources.

Types of Mental health issues



Youth Suicide attempts or depression



IMPLEMENTATION

- We have spoken with representatives from the mental health department for Alexandria, Ms. Marketto
- Plan to attend a Pop-up table in May (Mental Health Awareness Month) Ms. Risk, and Ms. Carr plan the event's. We intend to get in contact
- Hazel Health offers access to free therapy for students (8-12 sessions)
- Teen Wellness Centers give support while prioritizing students with no insurance or in tougher circumstances
- Workshops have been introduced in some athletic programs (ACHS Football & Baseball team)
- Ideas for posters, social media post, and other resources have been created

PARTNERSHIPS



Teen Wellness Center-



PERFORMANCE EFFORT

SURVEYS CONDUCTED ACROSS ALL GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL THROUGH NAVIANCE

MULTIPLE SUPPORT SYSTEMS ACROSS THE SHOOOL

WORK SHOPS AND AWARENESS EVENTS IMPLEMENTED IN SOME AREAS

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

STUDENTS WHO ARE IDENTIFIED *AT RISK* ARE FOLLOWED UP WITH BY COUNSELORS

USAGE AND AWARENESS OF OUR RESOURCES ARE STILL INCONSISTENT

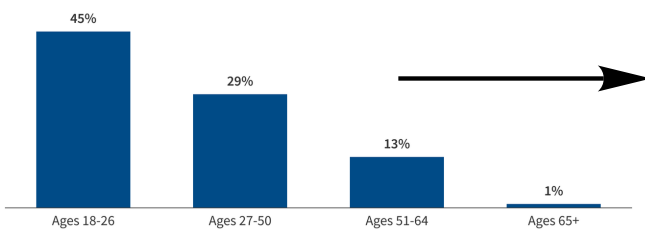
10% OF MIDDLE SCHOOL AND 13% OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS REPORTED SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING SUICIDE IN THE PAST YEAR

RECOMMENDATIONS

Our community should focus on prevention by creating more open conversations about mental health. Schools should implement regular seminars or classroom discussions starting in middle school and continuing through high school. Teaching students how to check in on each other and normalize asking for help could make a big difference.

Adults Ages 18-26 Experienced the Largest Increase in the Share Reporting Use of Mental Health Services from 2019 to 2022

Growth Over Time

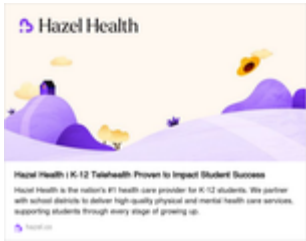


Note: Data reflects the percent increase in the share of adults who reported receiving counseling and/or medication for mental health conditions in the past year, from 2019 to 2022, by age group.

Source: KFF analysis of National Health Interview Survey, 2019-2022

Using statistics of adults from 2019-2022, the Gen-z/Millennial age reported higher usage of mental health resources. The problem stems from the youth and as the same youth becomes the current adult population, the problem follows along with them.

ONLINE



<https://www.columbiapsychiatry-dc.com/locations/alexandria-va/>

CITATIONS



Mental Health Resources for Youth

Information about resources available to youth looking for support with their mental health and substance abuse.

City of Alexandria

https://www.cfnova.org/images/pdf/InsightRegion_YMH_Final_Digital.pdf



Teen Wellness Center

The Teen Wellness Center is a medical clinic created to provide accessible health services to anyone between the ages of 12-19 living in the City of Alexandria.

City of Alexandria

IN PERSON

Reaching out to adult representatives of the cause in our ACPS, and ACHS community like Ms. Carr, and Ms. Risk who are in charge of Mental health Awareness Month are great options.