



# BY ALEXANDRIA CITY HIGH SCHOOL



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## TOPIC

12th grade team- **Mental Health In Alexandria's Youth**

## TOPIC DESCRIPTION

Mental health issues among the youth in Alexandria is a challenge that is constantly growing with many of the youth struggling with stress, emotions, isolation and even finding resources for help. All of these issues are influenced by community factors, social issues and even pressure from the academic area. Teenagers are directly impacted by this issue but it also affects families and support systems. To address this ongoing issue it requires mental health awareness and establishing that Alexandria's youth can access mental health resources to support their needs.

## RESULT

In Alexandria, the result and outcome will be the youth and children becoming mentally health due to having access to resources, safe environments and strong support systems. By collaborating, the community ill be able to address any issues early on to support positive mental health!



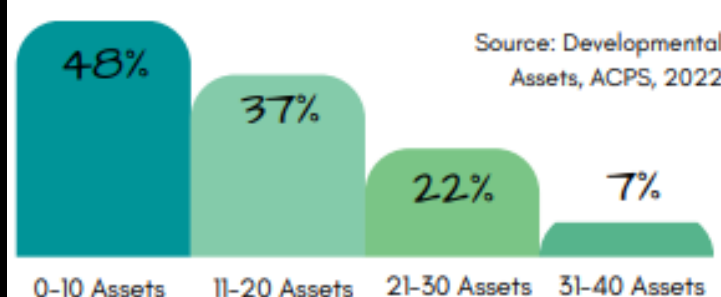
## CYCP GOAL AND STRATEGIC AREA

The CYCP Goal is that all Children, Youth, and Families will be Physically safe and Healthy. The strategic area that will be directly enforced is youth wellness.

## SIGNIFICANCE

This result matters because mental health plays a significant role at every stage in a person's life from infancy to being elderly. Mental health affects how we think, act, how we relate to others, handle stress and even make healthy choices. When you're struggling with your mental health it makes it hard to complete school, have a social life or even go into your workplace. This result will provide the youth with a feeling of belonging and protecting the youth from falling into bad habits due to their mental health struggles.

% of Youth Reporting Depression/Attempted Suicide by Asset Level

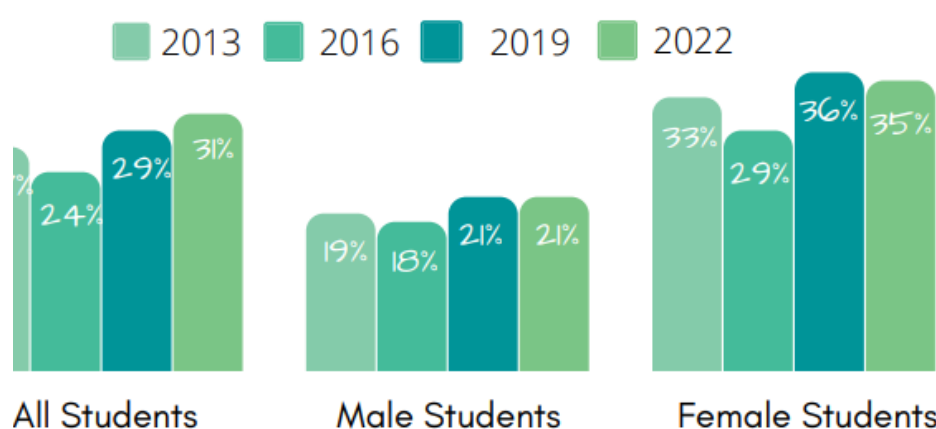


## HOW ARE WE DOING?

The Chart "How We Are Doing: Youth Depression/ Attempted Suicide has been provided by Developmental Assets, Alexandria City Public Schools, Search Institute. This data shows trends within youth mental health groups from 2013-2025. Overall, the percentage of students that have attempted suicide or feeling depressed increased from 27% to 31% which indicates a moment that youth mental health decreased after a brief improvement. Male students rates remained stable but increased slightly from 19% to 21%. Female students have reported higher depression levels with rates going from 33% to 36%. This data suggests that youth mental health in Alexandria is a significant growing issue, nearly one in three students are affected with depression and poor mental health.

### Youth Depression/Attempted Suicide\*

Source: Developmental Assets, Alexandria City Public Schools, Search Institute



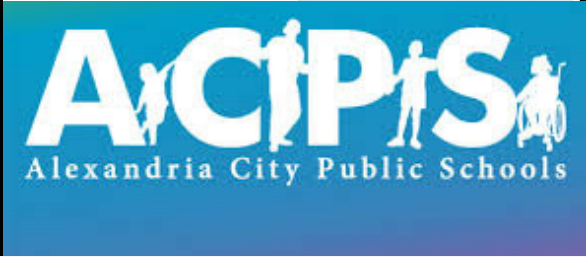
Youth Depression and Attempted Suicide Rates have increased by 14.8% over the last decade. 1 in 3 female students and 1 in 5 male students report feeling frequently depressed or have attempted suicide in 2022.

IMPLEMENTATION

- DCHS’s Child and Family Behavioral Health Services is currently in the process of strengthening community based education, outreach and access around family mental health.
- DCHS’s Child and Family Behavioral Health Services is also in the process of increasing access to family mental health via schools.
- DCHS Youth Development Team is currently in the process of advocating and providing mental health training's and education.

PARTNERSHIPS

- DCHS Child and Family Behavioral Services
- DCHS Youth Development Team
- ACPS- Office of Students Support Teams



PERFORMANCE EFFORT

Yes, the results are moving into the correct direction. The Alexandria Department of Community and Human services have been working toward improving education, access to mental health services for families and outreach. Support systems are expanding in schools which provide more accessible care for the youth. Furthermore, mental health awareness programs are increasing and more teachers & ACPS workers are going through mental health training to strengthen support!

PERFORMANCE EFFECT

The youth in Alexandria are facing many barriers within improving their mental health including motivation, lack of mental health resources and access to community facilities. Peer pressure discourages individuals from asking for help or even healthy behaviors. On the other hand, positive enablers like strong support systems and positive environments will increase an individuals mental health.

Internal Factors:

- Lack of motivation, high stress levels, and insufficient personal support were noted as factors that exacerbate mental health issues.

Access and Resource Barriers:

- Many mentioned that poor access to mental health services, limited community facilities, and a general lack of funding hinder improvements.

Peer and Cultural Influences

- Peer pressure, easy access to drugs, and even economic factors (e.g., more disposable income among certain groups leading to higher substance use) were noted.

Systemic Issues

- Poor communication between school administrators and students, regulatory hurdles (such as those affecting menu changes in schools), and a tendency for students to underreport problems (due to fear or stigma) further complicate matters

RECOMMENDATIONS

My policy recommendations for Alexandria’s youth mental health should focus specifically on making mental health services stigma-free, available, and distinct. ACPS schools should be incorporating mental health education into the curriculum and provide what resources are available. Alexandria needs to strengthen partnerships within community organizations to gain more mental health support options and more areas of care. Services must be low-cost or affordable, easy to access so the youth feel safe to reach out for help, and 100% confidential. Both in-person and online campaigns will normalize the feeling of reaching out for support and explain how to access mental health resources. Staff and educators will know how to recognize early signs of mental health struggles and connect their students to the appropriate resources due to the mental health training they will receive.

ONLINE

City Of Alexandria’s Behavioral Health Servcies for Children-  
<https://www.alexandriava.gov/child-and-family-services/behavioral-health-services-for-children-and-families>  
  
Contact Child and family behavioral services at 571.213.7923 or email [DCHSYouthIntake@alexandriava.gov](mailto:DCHSYouthIntake@alexandriava.gov)

CITATIONS

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2023-05/CYCP%20Report%20Card%20-%20Youth%20Mental%20Health-3.pdf>

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/child-and-family-services/behavioral-health-services-for-children-and-families>

<https://www.alexandriava.gov/child-and-family-services/resources-for-child-youth-mental-health>

[https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-11/Physical,%20Mental,%20&%20Behavioral%20Health\\_0.pdf](https://www.alexandriava.gov/sites/default/files/2025-11/Physical,%20Mental,%20&%20Behavioral%20Health_0.pdf)

IN PERSON

- Teens are able to make free & confidential in person appointments with the teen wellness center by texting “APPT” to 571.329.2245 or calling 703.746.4776. It serves all of Alexandrias youth!
- The Youth in Alexandria are also encouraged to reach out to their school social workers, counselors, therapists or even trusted adults!
- Discuss concerns with a trusted adult or doctor