

Behavioral Health is a state of mental/emotional being and/or choices and actions that affect wellness. The field of behavioral health combines both mental health conditions and the actions typified by those conditions. Examples of behavioral health conditions include substance abuse or misuse, alcohol and drug addiction, serious psychological distress, suicide, and mental and substance use disorders. Disparities exist in the prevalence, treatment, and health outcomes of behavioral health conditions.

Racial Disparities

According to the 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), 46.3 million Americans aged 12+ (16.5% of the population) had a Substance Use Disorder (SUD) in the past year, of which 29.5 million reported an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) and 24.0 million reported a Drug Use Disorder (DUD).

American Indian/Alaska Native respondents had the highest prevalence, with 27.6% reporting an SUD in the past year, followed by 25.9% of Multiracial, 20.7% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 17.2% of Black, 17.0% of White, 15.7% of Hispanic, and 8.0% of Asian respondents.

Also among the NSDUH findings was that 43.7 million Americans aged 12+ (15.6% of the population) needed treatment for an SUD in the past year. The need was highest among American Indians/Alaska Natives, with 28.7% of respondents in need of SUD treatment, followed by 25.5% of Multiracial, 20.6% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 16.4% of Black, 15.9% of White, 15.0% of Hispanic, and 7.7% of Asian respondents.

27.2% of Multiracial Americans aged 12-17 reported experiencing a Major Depressive Episode (MDE) in the last year, followed by Hispanic (22.2%), White (20.7%), Black (14.0%), and Asian (13.8%) respondents.

Among adults aged 18+, 13.9% of Multiracial Americans reported experiencing an MDE in the last year, compared to 11.2% of American Indian/Alaska Native, 8.9% of White, 7.9% of Hispanic, 6.7% of Black, 5.1% of Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 4.8% of Asian respondents.

Just 51.0% of Black adults aged 18+ who reported experiencing an MDE in the past year received treatment, compared to 58.5% of Hispanic, 60.7% of Multiracial, and 64.0% of White respondents.¹

Age Disparities

When breaking down the NSDUH data by age group, 25.6% of persons aged 18-25 had an SUD in the past year, compared to 16.1% of persons aged 26+, and 8.5% of persons aged 12-17.

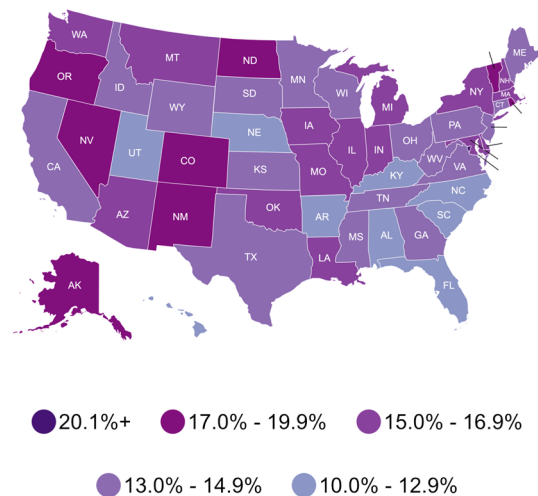
Similarly, 25.1% of persons aged 18-25 were in need of SUD treatment, compared to 15.1% of persons aged 26+, and 7.6% of persons aged 12-17.

8.3% of adults aged 18+ reported having an MDE in the past year, with 18.6% of persons aged 18-25 reporting an MDE, followed by 9.3% of persons aged 26-49, and 4.5% of persons aged 50+.

Just 61.0% of adults aged 18+ who reported having an MDE received treatment, with 51.1% of persons aged 18-25 receiving treatment, 63.5% of persons aged 26-49, and 68.2% of persons aged 50+.¹

Regional Disparities

It is difficult to accurately gauge by state the number of people who need all types of behavioral health services, but did not receive them. The NSDUH does however measure persons aged 12+ who needed SUD treatment at a specialty facility but did not receive it. 22.91% of persons living in the District of Columbia needed SUD treatment but did not receive it, compared to just 11.14% of persons living in Utah.²



References

¹Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2022). *Key substance use and mental health indicators in the United States: Results from the 2021 National Survey on Drug Use and Health*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/report/2021-nsduh-annual-national-report>

²Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (n.d.). *State Data Tables and Reports From the 2021 NSDUH (Preliminary)*. <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/nsduh/state-reports-NSDUH-2021>