

# The importance of prioritizing adolescent mental health: Challenges and solutions.

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## Abstract

**Adolescence is a critical period of development that is marked by many changes, challenges, and opportunities. During this time, young people undergo significant physical, emotional, social, and cognitive transformations, and these changes can have a profound impact on their mental health and wellbeing. Social determinants such as poverty, discrimination, violence, and lack of access to education and employment opportunities can significantly affect young people's mental health and wellbeing. Addressing these underlying social and systemic factors is essential to promoting positive mental health outcomes for young people.**

**Keywords:** Adolescent, Mental health, Insomnia, Poverty, Discrimination, Violence, Lack of access.

## Introduction

Unfortunately, despite the growing awareness of the importance of mental health, many adolescents around the world continue to struggle with mental health issues. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 10-20% of children and adolescents worldwide experience mental disorders, with half of these cases starting before the age of 14. Depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance abuse, and self-harm are some of the most common mental health problems that affect young people [1].

The consequences of untreated adolescent mental health issues can be severe and long-lasting. Mental health problems can impair young people's ability to learn, socialize, and form healthy relationships. They can also lead to substance abuse, self-harm, and suicide, which is the third leading cause of death among adolescents globally. To address the mental health needs of adolescents, it is crucial to prioritize their mental health and wellbeing. This means providing them with access to mental health services and resources that can help them cope with the challenges of adolescence and build resilience. However, there are several challenges to achieving this goal. One of the biggest challenges is the stigma that surrounds mental health. Many young people are reluctant to seek help for mental health issues because of the fear of being judged or ostracized [2].

Another challenge is the lack of resources and funding for mental health services. Many communities, especially in low- and middle-income countries, do not have adequate mental health facilities or trained professionals to provide services to young people. Even in high-income countries, mental health services can be expensive and difficult to access, particularly

for marginalized populations. To address these challenges, there are several solutions that can be implemented. One solution is to promote mental health awareness and education. This can involve creating safe spaces for young people to discuss mental health issues openly and without fear of stigma. It can also involve educating parents, teachers, and community members about the signs of mental health issues and how to support young people who are struggling [3].

Another solution is to increase investment in mental health services and resources. This can involve expanding the availability of mental health services in schools, hospitals, and community centers. It can also involve training more mental health professionals and making mental health services more affordable and accessible for everyone. Finally, it is important to involve young people themselves in the effort to prioritize adolescent mental health. Young people can play an active role in promoting mental health awareness, advocating for better mental health services, and creating safe spaces for themselves and their peers to discuss mental health issues [4].

Moreover, it is important to recognize that adolescent mental health is not just a personal issue, but also a social and systemic issue. Social determinants such as poverty, discrimination, violence, and lack of access to education and employment opportunities can significantly affect young people's mental health and wellbeing. Addressing these underlying social and systemic factors is essential to promoting positive mental health outcomes for young people. One approach to addressing these social determinants is through a holistic, multispectral approach to mental health promotion and prevention [5].

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## Conclusion

Additionally, it is important to recognize that young people are not a homogenous group, and different adolescents may have different mental health needs and experiences. Therefore, mental health interventions and services should be tailored to meet the diverse needs of young people, taking into account their cultural backgrounds, identities, and experiences. Finally, it is crucial to involve young people themselves in the design and implementation of mental health interventions and services. Young people are experts in their own experiences, and their perspectives and insights can inform the development of effective and relevant mental health services. Furthermore, involving young people in decision-making processes can empower them to take ownership of their own mental health and wellbeing.

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