

Emotional Distress - Youth

DESCRIPTION

While most youth are healthy, physically and mentally, one in every four to five in the general population meet criteria for a mental disorder. With 50 percent of cases of mental illness beginning by age 14, and three-quarters by age 24, it is very important to make sure that youth dealing with the onset or continuation of mental or emotional distress receive the help they need.¹ Some stress can be positive in that it provides the energy to tackle a big test, presentation or sports event. Too much stress, however, can create unnecessary hardship and challenge.

The Minnesota Student Survey asks many questions that could indicate emotional distress. A sample of those is highlighted for this indicator.

HOW WE ARE DOING

The 2016 Minnesota Student Survey found that 17 percent of Ramsey County 8th, 9th and 11th graders said they have a long-term mental health, behavioral or emotional problem. When asked to react when given the statement "I feel good about myself," 37.5 percent of Ramsey County 11th-graders and one-third of 9th graders responded with "somewhat/sometimes" or "not at all/rarely." As we look a little deeper at this question, an average of 6.9 percent from each grade reported "not at all or rarely." Of those who responded "extremely/almost always," almost half of all 5th graders reported feeling this way, compared to only one third of 8th and 9th graders, and a quarter of 11th graders.

Other questions asked students perceptions of how others cared or valued them. When asked "how much do you feel your parents care about you," about 6 percent of 5th graders, 10 percent of 9th graders, and 14 percent of 11th graders responded "not at all," "a little", or "some." When asked if they "feel valued or appreciated by others," almost one-third of 5th graders and about 35 percent of 9th and 11th graders answered "not at all or rarely" or "somewhat or sometimes."²

DISPARITIES

It is estimated that 10 to 20 percent of the children in the U.S. at any time have significant emotional and behavioral disturbances. High rates of unmet need exist across racial/ethnic groups, with only approximately one in five children with mental health concerns receiving care.³ In Minnesota, youth from minority racial/ethnic groups are approximately one-third to one-half as likely to receive mental health care as white youth.⁴

RISK FACTORS

Stress can come from a variety of sources for youth including doing well in school, making and sustaining friendships, or managing perceived expectations from their parents, teachers or coaches. Ignoring emotional distress can have severe consequences for a child. Dealing with a mental health issue while trying to grow and learn can be extremely difficult.¹ A growing body of research has established that children as young as infancy may be affected by events that threaten their safety or the safety of their parents or caregivers.⁵

Information to note

- Youth from minority racial/ethnic groups in Minnesota are about 1/3 to 1/2 less likely to receive mental health services as white youth.
- Almost 1/3 of Ramsey County 5th graders and 37% of both 9th and 11th graders do not feel valued or appreciated by others.



Community voice

"Stress problems, trauma."
- Karen Female, age 35-44

Generally, stress was mentioned through the responses, however 412 explicitly stated stress as a barrier to health overall.

¹ Warning Signs of Mental Illness. American Psychiatric Association. <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/warning-signs-of-mental-illness>. Accessed July 2018.

² Minnesota Student Survey. Saint Paul – Ramsey County Public Health data set.

³ Being, Belonging, Becoming: Minnesota's Adolescent Health Action Plan. Minnesota Department of Health. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/youth/bbb/status.html>. Accessed July 2018.

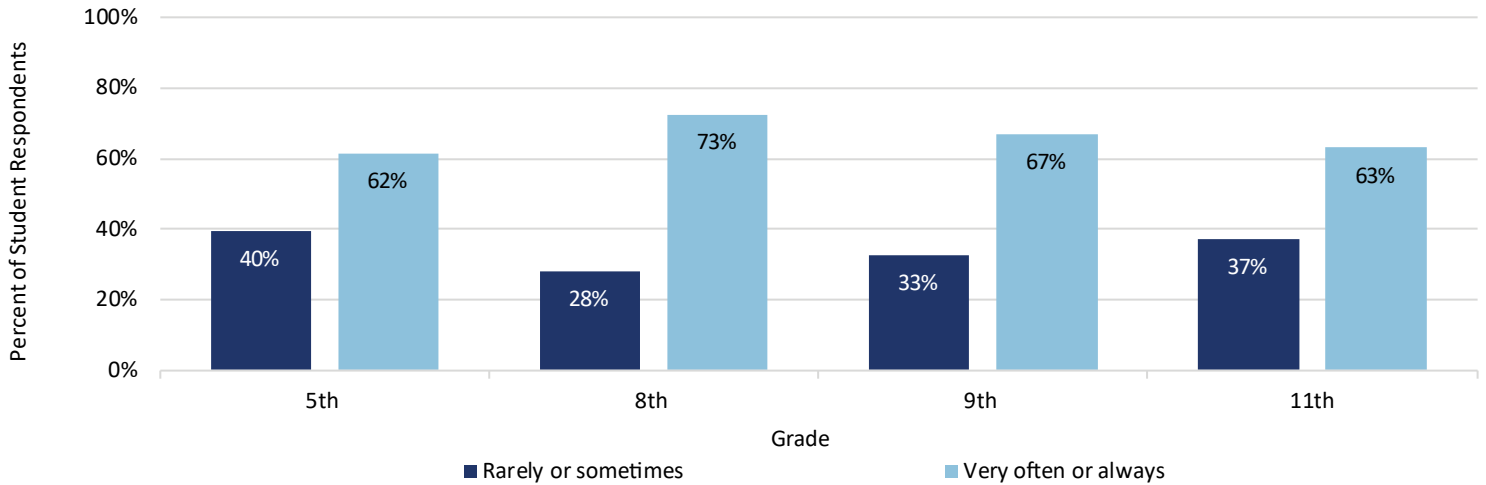
⁴ Holm-Hansen C. Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Children's Mental Health. Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. <https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research/research-library/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-childrens-mental-health-0>. Published October 2006. Accessed July 2018.

⁵ Warning Signs and Risk Factors for Emotional Distress. SAMSHA. <https://www.samhsa.gov/find-help/disaster-distress-helpline/warning-signs-risk-factors>. Accessed July 13, 2018

WHAT RAMSEY COUNTY GOVERNMENT IS DOING

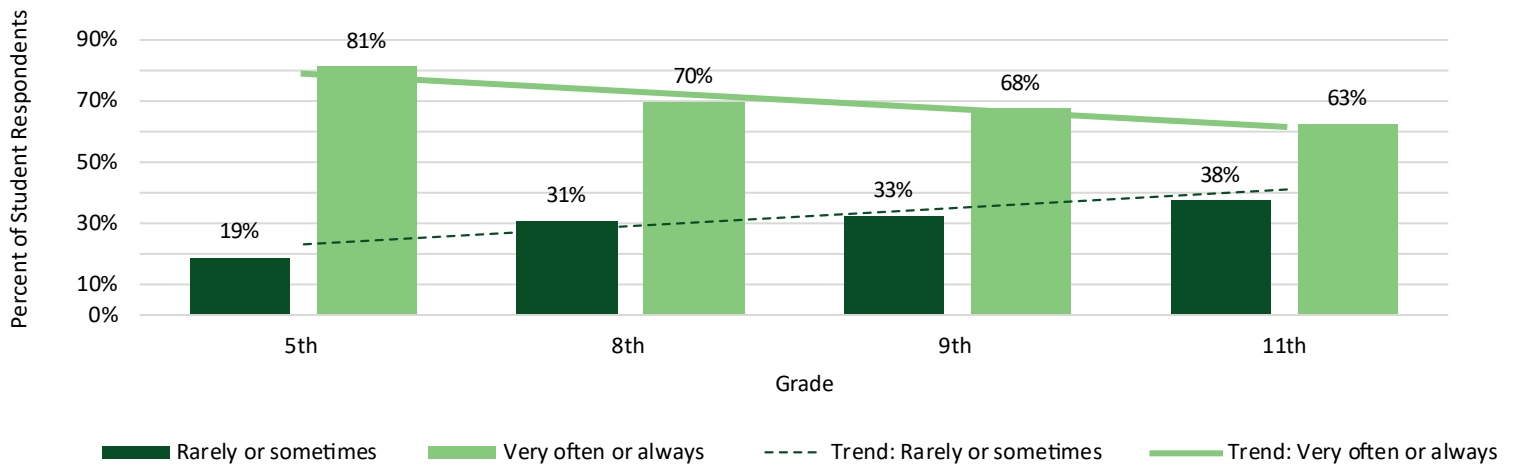
Ramsey County offers an array of mental health services to youth and children. Children’s Crisis services include emergency visits to families with children in crisis and a 24/7 phone line offering support and referral. Ramsey County’s Children’s Mental Health programs offer assessment and referral, and targeted case management. All services are offered on a sliding-fee scale for those without insurance coverage.

Feel Good About Life and Future, Ramsey County Students, 2016



Source: Minnesota Student Survey. Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health data set.

Feel Good About Self, Ramsey County Students, 2016



Source: Minnesota Student Survey. Saint Paul - Ramsey County Public Health data set.