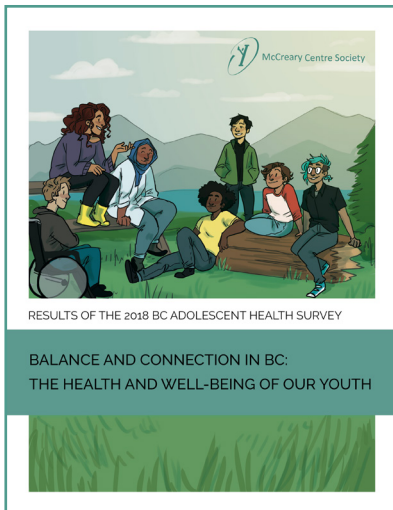


BC YOUTH WITH DEPRESSION WHO MISSED OUT ON NEEDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



A 2018 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY FACT SHEET



This fact sheet uses data from McCreary Centre Society's BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS). The most recent BC AHS was completed in 2018 by over 38,000 youth aged 12–19. To learn more about the survey and view other fact sheets and reports, please visit mcs.bc.ca.

This fact sheet was prepared by Maddie Moffat and Rachel Yuen during a practicum placement completed as part of a Bachelor of Science in Nursing program at Langara College.

Depression during adolescence has been linked to poor social well-being, educational challenges, and health risk behaviour (Eigenhuis et al., 2021). There is a growing need for mental health services for this age group (Wiens et al., 2020). However, some young people may face barriers to accessing care.

Other studies have shown that young people's access to mental health services are improved when they have a history of positive experiences in the health care system, support from friends and family, and experience health literacy, including knowledge of available treatment options (Eigenhuis et al., 2021).

PREVALENCE OF DEPRESSION

"I feel like I don't belong in this world. Life is too hard. I look around and see everyone happy but here I am, depressed."
12-year-old female

"I've felt extremely depressed lately and every night/day I think about suicide and I just don't want to be alive anymore."
13-year-old non-binary youth

In 2018, 15% of BC youth identified they had depression (45% of non-binary youth vs. 19% of females vs. 10% of males). Youth with depression also experienced other mental health challenges. For example, 65% of youth with depression also had anxiety and 10% had an alcohol or other substance use addiction. Males with depression were more likely than females to report they also had a substance use addiction (12% vs. 8%), whereas females were more likely to also have anxiety (e.g., 74% vs. 44%).

ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE PAST YEAR

"I would like there to be more mental help experts as I had to wait for four months before I got the help I needed. Those four months were some of the hardest months of my life."

17-year-old female

"What do you do if you need help with mental health but don't want your parents to find out?"

13-year-old male

"Counselling needs to be more affordable for teens."

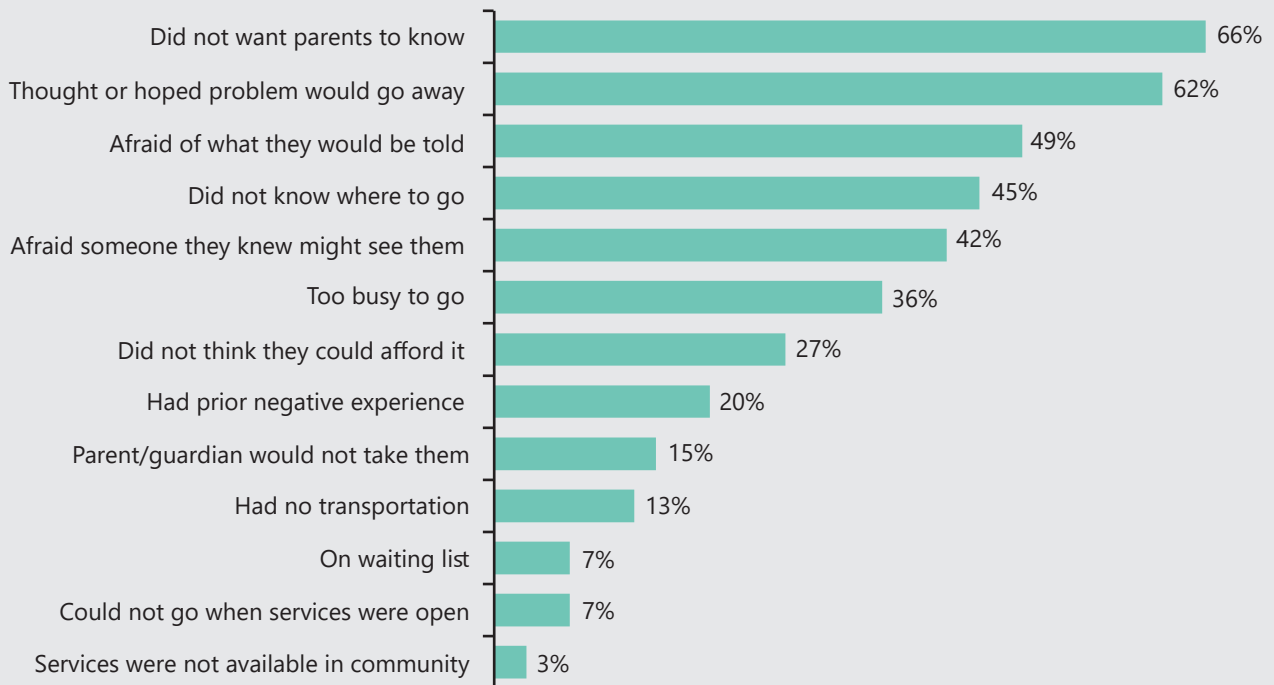
17-year-old non-binary youth

Almost 6 in 10 (58%) youth with depression did not access mental health services in the past year when they felt they needed them. Female and non-binary youth with depression were more likely than males to have missed out on needed services (e.g., 62% of females vs. 46% of males).

The most common reasons youth with depression gave for missing out on needed mental health services was that that they did not want their parents to know and that they thought or hoped the problem would go away.

There were some gender differences in the reasons youth with depression missed out on needed mental health services. For example, non-binary youth were the most likely to miss out because their parent would not take them (23% vs. 16% of females vs. 10% of males), and females were more likely than males to report not accessing services because of a prior negative experience (22% vs. 14%).

REASONS YOUTH WITH DEPRESSION DID NOT ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE PAST YEAR (among those who felt they needed services)



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF YOUTH WHO MISSED OUT ON NEEDED SERVICES

Missed school

Among youth with depression, 62% of those who reported they had missed out on needed mental health services missed school in the past month due to their mental health (vs. 44% of those who did not miss out on services), including 29% who missed class on three or more days. Those who missed out on mental health services were also more likely to have missed three or more days of school for other reasons, including because they skipped class and were experiencing bullying.

Missed extracurricular activities

Youth with depression who missed out on needed mental health services were more likely to report they also missed out on participating in extracurricular activities in the past year because of their anxiety or depression (64% vs. 38% of youth with depression who did not miss out on needed mental health services).

Access to health care

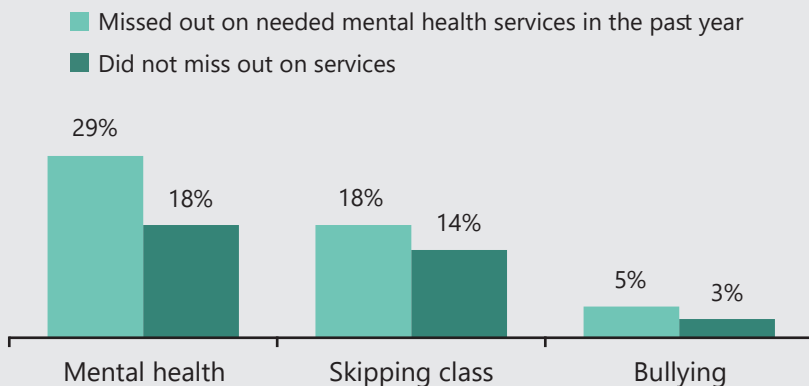
Among youth with depression, there were no differences between those who did and did not access needed mental health services in accessing an emergency room, family-doctor, youth clinic, or counsellor/psychologist in the past year. However, those who missed out on needed mental health services were more likely to access health care at a walk-in clinic (42% vs. 38%).

Mental health

Among youth with depression, those who missed out on needed mental health services were more likely to:

- Feel they managed their stress poorly (49% vs. 30% of those who did not miss out on needed mental health services).
- Experience extreme stress in the past month (49% vs. 26%).
- Experience extreme despair in the past month (42% vs. 18%).
- Seriously consider suicide in the past year (74% vs. 47%).
- Attempt suicide in the past year (28% vs. 14%).

REASONS YOUTH WITH DEPRESSION MISSED SCHOOL ON THREE OR MORE DAYS IN THE PAST MONTH



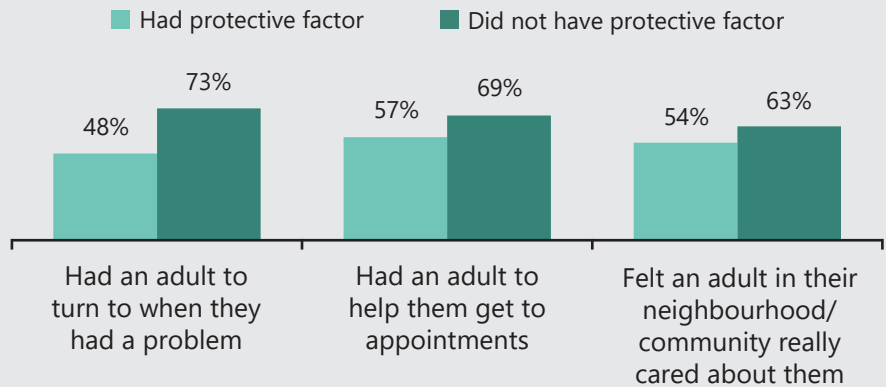
REDUCING THE LIKELIHOOD THAT YOUTH MISS OUT ON NEEDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Youth with depression were less likely to report they had missed out on needed mental health services when they:

- Felt that people in their family understood them quite a bit or very much (36% vs. 55% who felt somewhat understood vs. 70% who felt a little or not at all understood).
- Found a friend helpful when asked for support (55% vs. 74% who did not find the support helpful).
- Felt that their teachers cared about them (52% vs. 64% who did not feel their teachers cared about them).
- Felt part of their community (50% vs. 64% who did not feel part of their community) and that an adult in the community really cared about them.
- Had an adult to help them make appointments (57% vs. 71% of those who did not) and get to appointments.
- Had an adult to turn to with their problems.

Many of these same protective factors were also beneficial to youth with depression who had already missed out on mental health services.

YOUTH WITH DEPRESSION WHO MISSED OUT ON NEEDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES IN THE PAST YEAR



SUMMARY

Around 6 in 10 BC youth with depression did not access mental health services when they felt they needed them – most commonly because they did not want their parent to know. Youth who had supportive adults and peers in their life were less likely to miss out on needed services.

RESOURCES

Kids Help Phone offers 24/7 mental health supports (1-800-668-6868).

Here to Help has mental health and substance use information at heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-modules.

KUU-US Crisis Line offers support to Indigenous youth (1-800-KUU-US17).

Youth in BC is a space to chat online with a crisis responder (noon–1 AM) at youthinbc.com.

Foundry offers online and in-person supports for youth ages 12–24 at foundrybc.ca/info-tools/mental-health-substance-use/.

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TO CITE THIS FACT SHEET:

Moffat, M., Yuen, R., Poon, C., Smith, A., & McCreary Centre Society. (2022). *BC youth with depression who missed out on needed mental health services: A 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey fact sheet*. [Fact sheet]. McCreary Centre Society. Available at mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2018bcahs_factsheet_depressed_missed_out_mh_services.pdf.