



BREAKING THE SILENCE NEW MEXICO IS A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION THAT PROMOTES MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY, ADVOCACY, AND WELL-BEING FOR TEENS, YOUTH, AND ADULTS THROUGH EDUCATION AND PERSONAL STORIES. OUR CORE PROGRAMS SHARE THE GOAL OF ENDING THE STIGMA, SHAME, SILENCE, AND SECRECY SURROUNDING MENTAL ILLNESS AND SUICIDE.



- Since fall of 2020 BTSNM has presented to over 9,000 students in 97 schools across New Mexico.
- Demographics:
  - 61% Hispanic/Latino
  - 22% Caucasian/White
  - 8% Multi-racial
  - 3% Native American
  - 2% African American/Black

## SOME CONCERNING NEW MEXICO STATISTICS

- NM Suicide rate per 100,000: 25 vs 14.1 for U.S.
- Youth with 2+ Adverse Childhood Experiences:
  - NM: 25.6% vs 18.2% U.S.

Adults with Serious Mental Illness:

NM: 6.8% vs 5.3% U.S.

Native Americans are 14.2 times as likely to have experiences 2+ ACEs than population as a whole

## SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6–17 experience a mental health disorder each year.
- One-half of all chronic mental illness begins by the age of 14.
- High school students with depression are more than 2x more likely to drop out than their peers
- 37% of students with a mental health condition age 14 and older drop out of school—the highest dropout rate of any disability group
- More than half of people with a mental health condition in the U.S. did not receive any treatment in the last year.
- The average delay between onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.

# PARENTAL MENTAL HEALTH

One in 14 children aged 0–17 years had a parent who reported poor mental health, and those children were more likely to have poor general health, to have a mental, emotional, or developmental disability, to have adverse childhood experiences such as exposure to violence or family disruptions including divorce, and to be living in poverty.

A [study by the American Journal of Psychiatry](#) followed children of depressed parents over a 20-year period to gauge how they fared in adulthood. They found the children were three times more at risk for mental health and substance abuse disorders than children whose parents weren't depressed.

# SCHOOL TEACHERS AND STAFF

Nearly three-fourths of teachers and 85 percent of principals are experiencing frequent job-related stress, compared to just a third of working adults.

In the 2021 State of the US Teacher Survey, as many as 50% of teachers reported burnout, while 27% said they were experiencing symptoms of depression.

Among the top reasons for teacher stress are managing student behavior and supporting students' mental health and well-being.

## ADDITIONAL CHALLENGES FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

- On average rural Americans must travel twice as far to a hospital as their urban counterparts.
- Rural Americans are twice as likely to lack broadband internet, limiting access to telehealth.
- Rural youth are at an increased risk of suicide, but rural areas have fewer youth suicide prevention services.

# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC COSTS

- Serious mental illness costs America \$193.2 billion in lost earning every year.
- 37% of students with a mental health condition age 14 and older drop out of school—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.
- High school students with depression are more than 2x more likely to drop out than their peers.
- One study found that five percent of students do not finish their education due to psychiatric disorders and estimated that 4.29 million people would have graduated from college had they not been experiencing such disorders.
- Suicide and suicidal thoughts can affect the larger school community.
- Peers, family members, faculty, and staff may be personally affected out of concern for these students.



# SOLUTIONS

- **School-based mental health services** can improve access to care, allow for early identification and treatment of mental health issues, and may be linked to reduced absenteeism and better mental health outcomes. School-based services can also reduce access barriers for underserved populations, including children from low-income households and children of color.
- Train teachers and school staff on how to identify and help students who may be struggling with mental health issues.
- Support staff mental health
- Examine ways to improve collaboration between child services and schools.
- Mental health education for everyone