

Go-Throughs to Get Through: Low-Income Young Adults and Mental Health

Young adults living in poverty face high exposure to “go-throughs,” including structural disadvantages and trauma.

Percent of youth affected by mental illness in the last year:

26.9% WHITE

20.4% HISPANIC

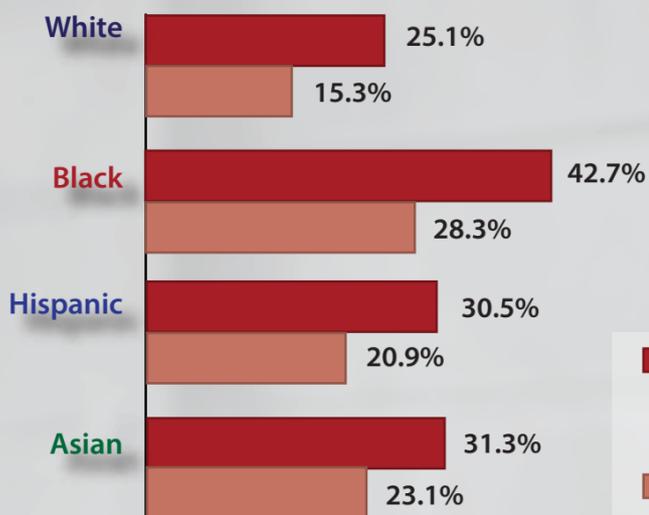
14.8% BLACK

22.8% OTHER YOC (youth of color)

They frequently “get through” these challenges without formal mental health supports.

8% of poor young adults (more than 3/4 of a million young people) needed mental health treatment in the last year but did not receive it.

Young adults who experience psychological distress are more likely to be poor.



■ Poverty rate for young adults experiencing serious psychological distress
■ Overall young adult poverty rate



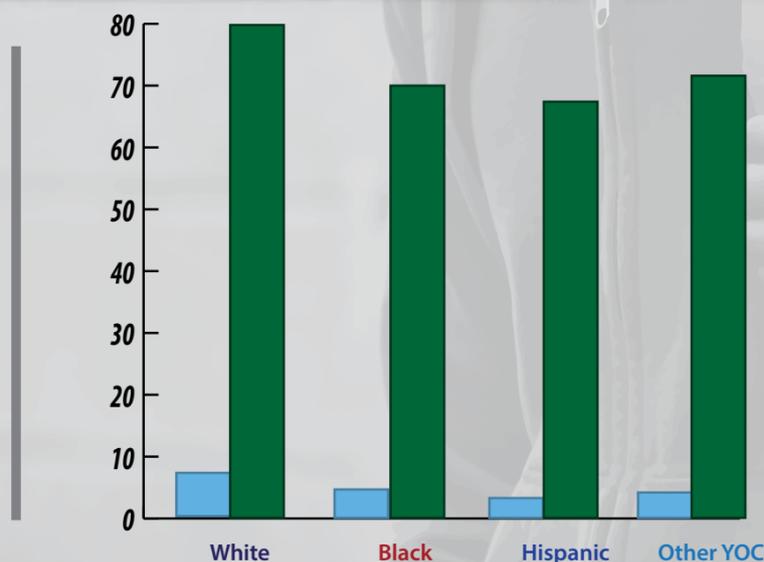
17.3% poor young men experienced serious psychological distress in the last year



24.2% poor young women experienced serious psychological distress in the last year

Substance use is common among young adults, but substance abuse is rare.

White young adults experience drug and alcohol abuse rates (7%) **1.5-2 times higher** than youth of color.



■ Percent of poor young adults experiencing illicit drug or alcohol **abuse** in the last year
■ Percent of poor young adults experiencing illicit drug or alcohol **use** in the last year*

* **Abuse:** use of alcohol or illicit drugs that leads to clinically significant impairment or distress | **Use:** any use of alcohol or illicit drugs in the last year

Low-income young adults who have insurance don't know it covers mental health services.



Young adults + health insurance

- 78% of poor young adults report that they have health insurance.
- 35% report that they have health insurance through Medicaid.

15% of poor young adults are **unsure** whether their health insurance covers mental health services.



Nearly **1 in 4** (22%) white young adults believe that their health insurance covers mental health treatment

5 - 10%

Black and Hispanic young adults believe their health insurance covers mental health treatment

Black (46.2%) and Hispanic (42.1%) young adults are **disproportionately likely to be insured through Medicaid** compared with white young adults (26.6%).