

# Mental Health in Washington, D.C.



Many Washingtonians struggle with their mental health.

It is more important than ever to build a stronger mental health system that provides the care, support, and services needed to help people build better lives.

**143,000**

adults in Washington, D.C. have a mental health condition.



**1 in 5** adults experience a mental illness each year.

More than **1 in 20 U.S. adults** experience a **serious mental illness** each year.



**1 in 6** U.S. adolescents aged 12-17 experience a **major depressive episode** each year.

**5,000** Washington, D.C. adolescents experience a **major depressive episode** each year.

**34,000** Washington, D.C. adults have a **serious mental illness**.

**1 in 5** of the almost **5,000 people** in Washington, D.C. **who are unhoused** have a **serious mental illness**.



**1 in 20** adults have **serious thoughts of suicide** each year.

**28,000** Washington, D.C. adults have **serious thoughts of suicide** each year.

**1 in 9** adolescents aged 12-17 have **serious thoughts of suicide** each year.

**4,000** Washington, D.C. adolescents have **serious thoughts of suicide** each year.



**14%** of youth aged 0-17 in Washington, D.C. have **experienced 2+ adverse childhood experiences**, which are linked to mental illness and substance misuse in adulthood.

**44**

lives were **lost to suicide** in Washington, D.C. in 2022.

# Mental Health in Washington, D.C.



More than  
**125,000** people in Washington, D.C. live in  
a community without enough  
mental health professionals.

The need to address access to mental health care in Washington, D.C. is urgent.

**6x**

more likely for a Washingtonian to be **forced out-of-network** for mental health care than for primary care.

**10,233**

calls were made to Washington, D.C.'s **988 Suicide & Crisis Line** call centers in 2023.

**1 in 613**

ratio for school psychologists to students in Washington, D.C.'s K-12 public schools. This is **worse** than the recommended ratio of one school psychologist for every 500 students.

**WASHINGTON,  
D.C.**  
is facing a mental  
health crisis.

**63,000**

adults in Washington, D.C. reported needing mental health treatment but not receiving it between 2018-2019. **Cost is a prevailing factor** in not receiving treatment.

Washingtonians deserve to get the mental health care they need, when they need it.



NAMI DC is part of NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. Learn more at [namidc.org](https://namidc.org). For data citations, visit [nami.quorum.us/mhpolicystats/](https://nami.quorum.us/mhpolicystats/).

This fact sheet was compiled based on data available in March 2025.