



RESEARCH SOLUTIONS

April 2025 Newsletters

Written and prepared by Region 4- Regional Prevention Professionals



Mental Health Awareness Month

May is a time to spotlight the importance of mental well-being. In Arkansas, 23% of residents reported symptoms of anxiety or depression in early 2024, surpassing the national average. <https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/>

Let's take a moment to check in on ourselves and our loved ones. Mental health isn't just the absence of illness—it's a key part of our overall well-being. Whether you're a parent, student, teacher, or community leader, there's always space to pause, reflect, and support one another.



Providing support across all ages is very important. From children to older adults, mental health care enhances quality of life and fosters resilience; recognizing signs early can lead to better outcomes. This is why early intervention matters

Engaging in open conversations reduces stigma and encourages seeking help. Knowing that mental health is just as important as physical health, offers a chain reaction of positive health benefits — yet it's often something we feel hesitant to talk about. At Research Solutions Inc., we want everyone in our communities, from young students to

grandparents, to know that it's okay to ask for help. Checking in on a friend, making time for a walk outside, or simply sharing how you're feeling can create powerful ripples of change. Let's continue to build a culture where mental wellness is everyone's priority.

<https://www.arkansashouse.org/news/post/22966/mental-health-awareness-month>

Arkansas Mental Health Statistics

As we analyze the current data collected for our youth in our region (4) from the 2024 Arkansas prevention needs assessment, 34.6% of 6th–12th grade students in Region 4 reported feeling sad or hopeless almost every day for two weeks or more. 17.1% seriously considered



attempting suicide in the past year. To learn more, enter this link

<https://arkansas.pridesurveys.com/regions.php?year=2024> in your browser and select Region 4 for the full 2024 Arkansas Needs Assessment Report.

As our youth have matured into adulthood, it's evident that Arkansas currently ranks 38th out of 48 states, with 24.2% of adults reporting some form of depressive disorder, according to 2023 data.

With 32.6% of adults in Arkansas reporting symptoms of anxiety and/or depressive disorder, slightly higher than the national average of 32.3%, it's clear that many of these individuals are role models for our youth. This underscores the vital need to educate families comprehensively and early about mental and behavioral health. Emphasizing the importance of prioritizing self-care, maintaining supportive relationships, and engaging in activities that foster relaxation and joy is essential for overall well-being.

https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/Depression_a/AR

National Fentanyl Awareness

In December 2022, Arkansas had a fatal overdose rate of 1.4 per 100,000 residents, which is lower than the national rate of 2.8 per 100,000. In 2022, Arkansas recorded at least 587 overdose deaths. <https://www.sfchronicle.com/projects/us-drug-overdose-deaths/?fips=5031>

Illicitly manufactured fentanyl is a leading cause of overdose deaths in the U.S. Overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl, rose 55.6% between January 2020 and January 2021. Learn more at <https://www.dea.gov/fentanylawareness>. To see and understand the numbers, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has created a special memorial exhibit, The Faces of Fentanyl, to commemorate the lives lost from

fentanyl poisonings or overdoses. You are invited to explore the exhibit in person or virtually and to submit a photo of a loved one lost to fentanyl at <https://fof.dea.gov/>

In Region 4, 7.4% of students said they had been offered, sold, or given illegal drugs on school property in the past year.

Overdose Death Statistics

Provisional data shows about 87,000 drug overdose deaths from October 2023 to September 2024, down from around 114,000 the previous year. CDC Reports Nearly 24% Decline in U.S. Drug Overdose Deaths. <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2025/2025-cdc-reports-decline-in-us-drug-overdose-deaths.html> However, the fact remains that more than 107,000 people lost their lives to a drug overdose in 2023, with nearly 70% of those deaths attributed to opioids such as fentanyl.

The DEA provides information and resources to raise awareness about the dangers of fentanyl <https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2024/12/16/overdose-deaths-decline-fentanyl-threat-looms>.

To be the change that we want to see, it is a must that you educate yourself and those close to you. Understand the risks associated with fentanyl and share information within your community. Offer resources and support to those impacted by fentanyl-related incidents, and don't hesitate to consult mental health professionals when needed.

If you're not sure how fentanyl impacts our local area, you are not alone. Many overdoses happen because people are unaware that fentanyl can be hidden in pills, powders, and even vaping liquids. A simple conversation about the dangers of counterfeit drugs can save a life. Together, let's stay informed and share knowledge to keep our loved ones safe.



National Prevention Week – May 12–18

This week emphasizes the importance of substance use prevention and mental health promotion. Daily Themes include May 13: Opioid & Overdose Awareness, May 14: Cannabis & Vaping, May 15: Mental Health, and May 16: Alcohol Prevention

Prevention Week is a great time to remember that small efforts lead to big outcomes.

From the 2024 Arkansas Prevention Needs Assessment Report: Alcohol remains the most used substance among Region 4 youth, with 17.8% of 10th graders reporting use in the past 30 days. Marijuana use is on the rise, with 14.2% of 12th graders reporting current use.

Drug-free communities within our region will come together to host different activities and conversations to raise awareness about the importance of substance use/misuse prevention and mental health promotion. In Mississippi County, the O.P.P.S. Coalition will host a learn-and-lunch on May 14th at Arkansas Northeastern College.

So, whether you're a parent having an open dialogue with your child, a teacher leading a classroom discussion, or a community leader hosting an event, every action you take helps build a safer, stronger Northeast Arkansas. Prevention truly starts with connection!

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration offers a digital toolkit for National Prevention Week. Get your free kit at <https://www.samhsa.gov/about/digital-toolkits/prevention-week/toolkit>



World No Tobacco Day – May 31**Youth Tobacco Use Statistics**

This day focuses on the harmful effects of tobacco use and the tactics of tobacco companies targeting youth. An estimated 37 million children aged 13–15 worldwide use tobacco. The 2025 World No Tobacco Day campaign theme is “Unmasking the Appeal: Exposing Industry Tactics on Tobacco and Nicotine Products.” Find more information at <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-no-tobacco-day/2025>

In Region 4, 5.8% of middle schoolers and 12.3% of high schoolers reported using e-cigarettes in the past 30 days. 6.7% of students reported the current use of traditional cigarettes.

Advocating policies that shield young people from tobacco marketing and educating communities about the health risks associated with tobacco use is important in seeing the change we want to see. Encourage and support quitting efforts among tobacco users.

Tobacco companies spend billions to make smoking look appealing, especially to young people. But here's the truth: living tobacco-free leads to better health, more energy, and more opportunities. Encouraging kids to think critically about advertising and helping adults find support to quit are powerful steps toward healthier generations.

Ways to Get Involved here and right now:

Participate in efforts to implement policies that deter substance use and local workshops or seminars on substance misuse prevention. Make sure that you share your prevention stories at <https://www.facebook.com/Region4PreventionRepresentative>

We are here to help with distributing free prevention materials and resources in schools and workplaces. We offer prevention programs aimed at educating and empowering young individuals in all grade levels. Prevention doesn't happen in isolation — it happens when we all come together.

Here in Northeast Arkansas, Region 4, we overall have more students choosing to live drug-free lives, and we are so proud of the students, educators, parents, and volunteers who work every day to build healthier, drug-free communities. Your passion, creativity, and leadership inspire real change. Keep up the great work!

Community Awareness and Involvement: Call to Action

To continue in our region's prevention efforts to bring prevention awareness to our communities,

Plan with us a 🌟 Prevention Day on Campus 🌟 at your school or organization— this is an exciting opportunity for students to LEAD, LEARN, and INSPIRE others around critical topics, including:

- Behavioral and Mental Health
- Substance Use Prevention
- Positive Youth Leadership

We encourage Drug-Free Youth group leaders and/or student leaders interested in starting a drug-free youth group to start thinking of creative sessions you and your group can create!

Prevention Days on Campus at your school will be more than just a day of learning — it's a platform to empower youth voices and spark peer-driven changes in schools and communities. Together, we can build a movement of student leaders promoting positive mental and Behavioral health and drug-free futures.

Stay Informed, do your research. Here are some good References to get you started:

<https://www.kff.org/statedata/mental-health-and-substance-use-state-fact-sheets/>

https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/measures/Depression_a/AR

<https://www.arkansashouse.org/news/post/22966/mental-health-awareness-month>

<https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2025/2025-cdc-reports-decline-in-us-drug-overdose-deaths.html>

<https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2024/12/16/overdose-deaths-decline-fentanyl-threat-looms>



Stay Connected For more information or to get involved:

RSI NEA CommUNITY Resource Center: 2224 Conrad, Suite A, Jonesboro, AR

Research Solutions Inc. (RSI) provides substance misuse prevention services in Region 4. In Region 4, we continue to see how the efforts of school leaders, student groups, prevention partners, and community advocates are making an impact. Prevention is a shared effort, and every conversation counts!

Check out all of our newsletters, feel free to share with others, and stay updated on future events and prevention resources at www.researchsolutionsinc.org and follow us on Social Media at <https://www.facebook.com/Region4PreventionRepresentative/>