

SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS

Serious mental illnesses (SMI) are **long-term conditions** that can be **debilitating** and can **severely affect a person's ability to function**. If left untreated, SMI can prevent people from maintaining gainful employment and can lead to repeated psychiatric hospitalizations, homelessness, incarceration, and co-occurring substance use disorders. Approximately **5.7% of U.S. adults** 18 and over (14.6 million people) had serious mental illness in the past year.

Some Common SMI

SMI can greatly impact a person's ability to function both at work and at home, making everyday tasks and responsibilities much more challenging.



Bipolar Disorder

- Manic episodes of needing little or no sleep, for periods of time; having disjointed thoughts; and feeling abnormally euphoric and energized
- Depressive episodes of low energy, depressed mood or irritability, feeling hopeless, and having suicidal thoughts



Major Depressive Disorder

- Severe and sustained feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, pessimism, irritability, worthlessness, and fatigue
- Symptoms may include suicidal thoughts



Schizophrenia

- Distorted interpretation of reality
- Hallucinations (e.g., hearing voices), delusions (believing things that are untrue), and extremely disorganized thinking

SMI can also include conditions such as **anxiety disorders**, **eating disorders**, and **personality disorders**, if the degree of functional impairment is severe.

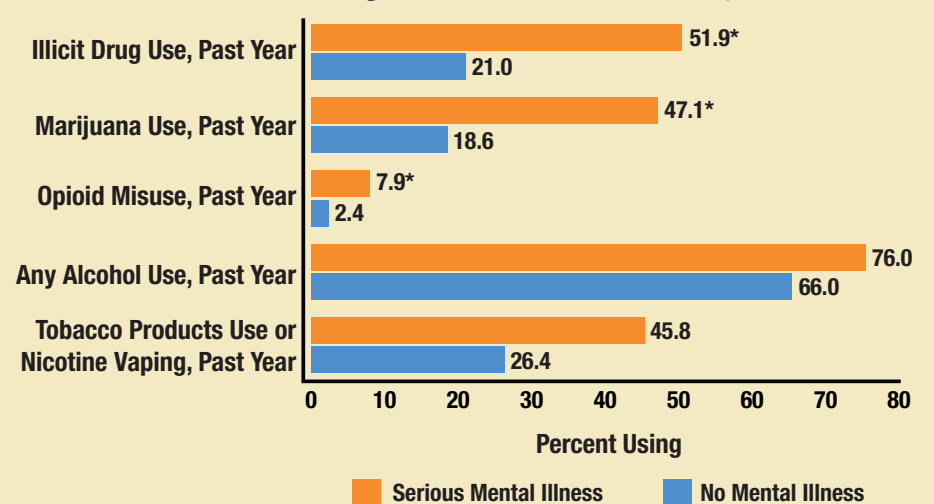
Substance Use Among Adults With SMI

People with SMI are much more likely to use substances.

Over the past year, compared with people with no mental illness, people with SMI were:

- **2.5 times more likely** to use illicit drugs
- **2.5 times more likely** to use marijuana
- **3.3 times more likely** to misuse opioids
- **1.2 times more likely** to use alcohol
- **1.7 times more likely** to vape nicotine or use tobacco

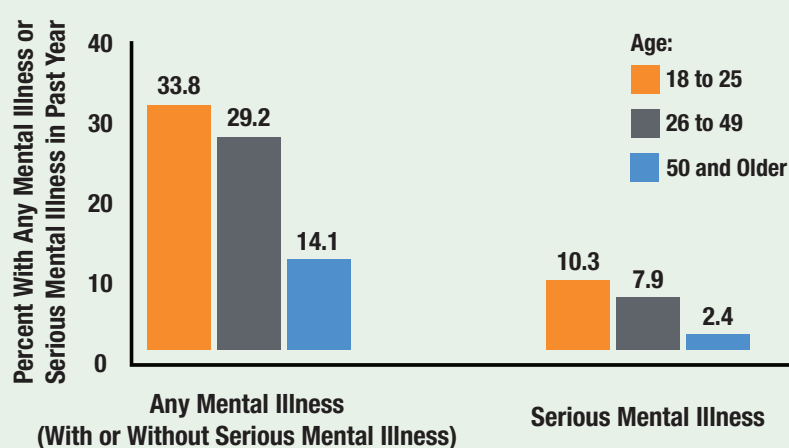
Past Year Substance Use Among Adults 18 and Older by Level of Mental Illness, 2023



Source: [2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health \(NSDUH\)](#)

*Difference between this estimate and the estimate for adults 18 and older without mental illness is statistically significant at the .05 level.

Any Mental Illness or Serious Mental Illness in the Past Year Among Adults 18 and Older, 2023



Adults 18 to 25 Experience Serious Mental Illness at a Higher Percentage Than Adults of Other Ages

In the past year...

- **10.3%** of adults 18 to 25 (**3.5 million people**)
- **7.9%** of adults 26 to 49 (**8.2 million people**)
- **2.4%** of adults 50 and older (**2.9 million people**)

...experienced serious mental illness

Source: [2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health](#). For NSDUH definitions of any mental illness and serious mental illness, please see [Appendix A in the 2023 NSDUH Detailed Tables](#).

Serious Emotional Disturbances (SED) in Children

The term **serious mental illness** generally applies to people 18 and older.

People younger than 18 who have mental health conditions that severely affect their ability to function in school, family, or community are described as having **serious emotional disturbances**.

Early mental health services and support can help children before problems interfere with other developmental needs.

Find more resources on SAMHSA's [Serious Mental Illness and Serious Emotional Disturbances](#) webpage.



SAMHSA's programs serve more than **11 MILLION PEOPLE** with SMI and other mental health conditions each year.

SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services funds:

- More than **40 grant programs**
- With nearly **3,000 active grants**
- In more than **1,000 cities**
- Across **59 states and territories**



SAMHSA's **Community Mental Health Services Block Grant (MHBG)** program funds community-based mental health services for **adults with SMI** and **children and adolescents with SEDs**. MHBGs:



Serve **8.25 million** adults and children annually



Serve all **50 states**, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and 6 Pacific jurisdictions



Include more than **1,900** providers/programs

MHBGs deliver results! Of the adults who received care from MHBG recipients:

76% reported improved functioning

77% reported improved social connectedness

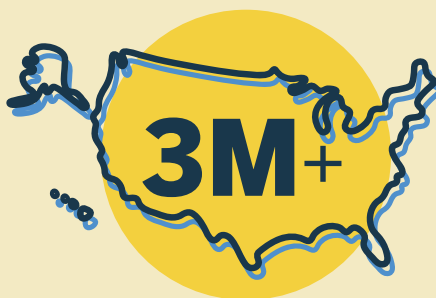
89% reported general satisfaction with the mental health services received

Source: [SAMHSA 2023 Uniform Reporting System](#)

SAMHSA supports **Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs)**, which provide a **comprehensive range** of **outpatient mental health** and **substance use** services to people with SMI and other disorders. CCBHCs serve **anyone who requests care** for mental illness or substance use, regardless of their ability to pay, place of residence, or age. CCBHCs also:



Provide **developmentally appropriate care** for children and youth



Serve more than **3 million** people annually



Give immediate care to people in crisis—**24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

CCBHCs help people stay connected to their communities and reduce burden on community resources. After 6 months of services, CCBHC clients show a:

58% decrease in hospitalization for detox/substance use

65% decrease in the use of emergency departments for mental illness

65% decrease in incarceration

69% decrease in hospitalization for mental illness

There are more than **500 CCBHCs nationwide** across 46 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Source: [SAMHSA Performance Accountability and Reporting System \(FY2024\)](#)

SAMHSA is committed to promoting the **prevention, treatment, and recovery** of mental disorders and to bringing **hope** to people with SMI and SED.

With early and consistent treatment, people with SMI and SED can better manage their conditions and lead productive lives.

Visit SAMHSA's [Serious Mental Illness](#) webpage to learn more.



SAMHSA's mission is to lead public health and service delivery efforts that promote mental health, prevent substance misuse, and provide treatments and supports to foster recovery while ensuring access and better outcomes for all.

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727) | 1-800-487-4889 (TDD) | www.samhsa.gov