

Nearly 1 in 4 young US adults sought mental health care during pandemic

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The stresses of the COVID-19 pandemic may have led to a significant

jump in the number of young American adults seeking help for [mental health](#) woes, new data shows.

Between 2019 and 2021, the percentage of American adults overall who said they'd sought and received any [mental health treatment](#) over the past year rose from 19.2% to 21.6%, according a report from the National Center for Health Statistics at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

But the rise was concentrated among younger adults—those aged 18 to 44. In this group, receipt of [mental health](#) care rose from 18.5% in 2019 to 23.2% in 2021. That means that close to 1 in every 4 young American adults is now battling some mental health issue.

In contrast, among adults over the age of 44, "the percentage who had received any mental health treatment did not change significantly during this time period," hovering around 20%, said study co-authors Emily Terlizzi and Jeannine Schiller.

The data comes from the U.S. federal government's [National Health Interview Survey](#) (NHIS).

Among adults under the age of 45, the rate at which mental care was sought rose for both women and men, although in 2021 rates of mental health care was significantly higher for women (28.6%) compared to men (17.8%).

Young white American adults had the highest use of mental health care in 2021 (30.4%), while rates were much lower among young Black adults (14.8%), Hispanics (12.8%) and Asians (10.8%).

The report didn't look at the reasons for such big discrepancies by race—whether it was due to real differences mental health, or whether it

was due to their ability (or inability) to access [mental health services](#).

As to geography, Americans living in [rural areas](#) were slightly more likely to have needed [mental health care](#) in 2021 than folks in large cities (25.2% vs. 22.2%, respectively). However, the CDC team said these differences "were not significant," statistically speaking.

The new report was published Sept. 7 as an *NCHS Data Brief*.

More information: There's more on finding care for mental health issues at the [U.S. National Institute for Mental Health](#).

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